

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NEW AFRICA; AFRICAN SYSTEMS AFTER KINSHIP

**EDITED BY
COUNCILL TAYLOR**



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IN THE NEW AFRICA;
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Contents

CODE
SYMBOL

Trade Unionism in Africa as a Factor in
Nation Building.

JOHN RIDDELL RDL-A
Civilizations, 1962, 12

Some Traditionally Based Forms of Mutual
Aid in West African Urbanization.

KENNETH LITTLE LIT-B
Civilizations, 1959, 9

Reinterpretations of Christian and Indigenous
Belief in a Nigerian Nativist Church.

JOHN C. MESSENGER, JR. MSR-A
American Anthropologist, 4/60, 62

Traditional Authority and Social Action in
Former British West Africa.

ST. CLAIR DRAKE DRA-A
Human Organization Fall 1960

Anti-European Violence in Africa:
a comparative analysis.

ROBERT A. LE VINE LEV-A
Journal of Conflict Resolution, 12/59, 3

The Clubs in Crisis: Race Relations in
the New West Africa.


L. PROUDFOOT AND H.S. WILSON PRT-B
American Journal of Sociology, 1/61, 66

The Kalabari Ekine Society: A Borderland
of Religion and Art.

ROBIN HORTON HOR-A
Africa, 1963, 33

CODE
SYMBOL

- Immigrants and Associations: The Ibo
In Twentieth Century Calabar.
W. T. MORRILL MOR-A
Comparative Studies in Society and
History, 7/63, 5
- The Bases of Nationalism Among the Bakongo
RENE LEMARCHAND LEM-A
Africa, 10/61, 31
- The Turkana Age Organization
P. H. GULLIVER. GLL-A
American Anthropologist, 10/58, 60
- Anlu: A Women's Uprising in the British Cameroons
ROBERT E. RITZENTHALER RIT-A
African Studies, 1960, 19
- Ngarage, A Gbeya Society
WILLIAM J. SAMARIN SAM-A
African Studies, 1959, 18



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Trade Unionism in Africa as a Factor in Nation Building

John RIDDELL

The role of the trade unions in helping to build free and democratic societies in the newly emerging nations of Africa has not, perhaps, received all the attention it deserves. The fact that the present heads of government in Guinea, the Congo and, most recently, Tanganyika are former trade union leaders has, no doubt, had a passing mention in the press; but this is surely symptomatic of a tendency worthy of closer study. The general lack of knowledge of the African trade union movement is, of course, not surprising. It is something very new — a mere stripling in comparison with, for example, such hoary veterans as the British trade union movement with its two centuries of history behind it. Yet in its relatively brief twenty-five years or so of existence, and especially in the last five years, it has passed through such kaleidoscopic and sometimes lightning changes as to baffle completely the ordinary outsider and even at times to take very much by surprise those most closely in touch with it. In the beginning a foreign importation, it has been continuously subject to a variety of conflicting pressures, both internal and external to the African continent, and in most countries is only just beginning to formulate any clear ideas on the aims, structure and methods of operation which really correspond to the needs and aspirations of the African workers themselves.

Before attempting any assessment of African trade unionism as a force for democracy, it would therefore be as well to sketch in the broad outlines of its history and the obstacles it has had to overcome, to get some idea of the general pattern of relations — however fluctuating they may be — between African trade unions and political parties both before and after independence, to examine the development of regional and continental groupings in that movement, and to take note of the origins and effects of the various external influences which have been brought to bear on it.

A separate essay could easily be devoted to each of these aspects, if not to each African country. The present study will consequently not venture to do more than call attention to the most salient and typical facts and tendencies and to draw some necessarily tentative conclusions.

THE GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONS IN AFRICA

As has already been noted, trade unionism was a foreign implantation on African soil. It started under the era of colonialism, and although that chapter is now rapidly drawing to a close it has left some imprints which will not easily be effaced. The first trade unions were brought to Africa by European settlers — in South Africa and the Rhodesias — and were naturally patterned on those which they knew in their homelands; in the case of South Africa they were sometimes set up even as branches of British unions. French officials did the same in the west and central African colonies, as well as in North Africa, and the organic ties of these unions to the metropolitan French centres remained unchanged virtually to the end of the colonial period.

Later, when the indigenous African workers began to organise towards the end of the twenties, they not unnaturally copied these metropolitan models; in the British territories this tendency received a further impetus when the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sidney Webb, sent a memorandum to all colonial governors in 1931 urging the introduction of legislation to give a legal basis to trade unions and to provide for their compulsory registration. Labour departments were set up in most British colonies before the outbreak of the second world war, and from 1940 onwards experienced British trade unionists were appointed to advise on the formation of trade unions. In 1937 a French decree granted recognition to trade unions in overseas territories, but membership was so hedged round with restrictions that they were virtually open only to Europeans. Full trade union freedom for the French overseas territories came, in practice as well as in theory, only with the adoption of the Overseas Labour Code in 1952.

North Africa.

Tunisia was the first country in French-speaking Africa to have a national trade union centre independent of any metropolitan organisation, this being set up in January 1946 — the *Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail* — although individual unions of Moslem workers had existed sporadically since 1924. Trade unions in Algeria and Morocco were constituted as branches of French metropolitan centres, in the first place by the *Confédération Générale du Travail*, and later by the C.G.T. - *Force Ouvrière* when a section of the French trade unions broke away from the communist-controlled C.G.T. in 1948. (A similar development took place about the same time in French West and Equatorial Africa, but there the *Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens* was also active). Preoccupied as it was with consolidating its own position in France, the C.G.T.-F.O. was, however, naturally unable to devote the same resources to overseas activities as the C.G.T.

In Morocco the right of indigenous workers to form trade unions of their own was forbidden by a decree of 1936, and another of the same year even prevented them joining any other unions. Although these decrees were never formally repealed until Morocco became independent in 1955, membership of Moroccans in metropolitan-based unions was tolerated after 1946; the main body to which they belonged was the *Union Générale des Syndicats Con-*

TRADE UNIONISM IN AFRICA AS A FACTOR IN NATION BUILDING

fédérés du Maroc, a branch of the French C.G.T. A curious, although no doubt unintentional, result of French labour policy in this country was, it may be noted, that Moroccan workers wishing to join a trade union were virtually compelled to belong to one controlled by the communists. A Moroccan national centre, the *Union Marocaine du Travail* was finally set up in defiance of the law in March 1955. With the establishment of an all-Moroccan government in November of that year, it started to grow in spectacular fashion and in four years it had over 600,000 members — the highest membership ever attained by any African organisation. Following the polarisation of opposing tendencies in the Istiqlal nationalist party, traditionalist elements in that party promoted the formation of a rival body, the *Union Générale des Travailleurs Marocains*, and when they later formed a new government this group received a good deal of official support. On the whole, however, the U.M.T. has held its ground.

In Algeria, the trade union situation was for long conditioned by the fact that the territory was considered an integral part of metropolitan France. Algerians were free to join French-based unions which had been established there for many years. There was indeed no move to set up Moslem unions until the upsurge of the nationalist movement in 1956. At the beginning of that year two rival centres were constituted: the *Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens* (owing allegiance to the *Front de Libération Nationale*) and the *Union Syndicale des Travailleurs Algériens* (supporting the *Mouvement National Algérien*). It was soon apparent that the former had the majority backing of Moslem workers in Algeria, while the membership of the latter was largely confined to Algerians working in metropolitan France. In any case, neither ever had any chance to develop genuine trade union activities in Algeria although they were never formally banned; successive waves of arrests of their leaders, starting in May 1956, and the continuous confiscation of the U.G.T.A. publication, led that organisation to set up headquarters in exile in Tunis in March 1957. Apart from political support for the Algerian revolution, its trade union activities have for obvious reasons been limited to the vocational and trade union training of Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco.

French West and Equatorial Africa.

The « Loi de cadre » of June 1956, which provided for internal self-government, gave a big impetus to the formation of indigenous African trade unions in French West and Equatorial Africa. In November 1955 the C.G.T. sections of Senegal and Mauretania broke away from the metropolitan centre. After considerable manœuvring between pro- and anti-C.G.T. elements, it was agreed at a preparatory conference in Cotonou in January 1957 to set up an independent organisation with branches in each territory. Still the founding congress of the *Union Générale des Travailleurs de l'Afrique Noire*, did not take place until two years later in Conakry, and, although it was attended by delegates from all the territories, the fissiparous tendencies already at work at the constitutional level were also apparent in the trade union field. In some countries, the U.G.T.A.N. unions were dissolved by the governments, in others they split of their own accord into « orthodox » and national groupings

which objected to the strong leftist leanings of the leadership in Guinea and its close connections with the communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions and the eastern block countries in general. U.G.T.A.N. unions survive now to any appreciable extent only in Guinea (where its president is the president of the Republic and it enjoys, of course, a monopoly), in Mali (under the name of the *Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Soudan*) and in Cameroun (under the name of the *Union Générale Kamerounaise du Travail*).

Meanwhile, the *Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens* and the C.G.T.-F.O. had also been active. The former has been able to promote the formation of sizeable organisations in the Central African Republic, Congo, Dahomey, Gaboon, the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta; they all go under the name of the *Confédération Africaine des Travailleurs Croyants*, a grouping which was established in 1956 and widened in 1959, with the addition of organisations in the Congo (Léopoldville) and Madagascar, into the *Union Pan-Africaine des Travailleurs Croyants*. The C.G.T.-F.O. also set up a regional grouping, in February 1958, which became autonomous in September 1959 and bears the name *Confédération Africaine des Syndicats Libres*. Although it has national sections in rather more countries than the Christian organisation, its total membership is probably about the same.

In addition, there are many independent unions in most of the ex-French African territories, so that the overall picture is one of considerable complexity. Efforts to bring them together in order to form single national centres have so far met with little success.

In the Belgian Congo, unions of both European and African workers began to develop after the second world war, but were seriously hampered by the absence of legal recognition. It was only in 1957, after a long campaign carried on by the Belgian Socialist and Christian centres, that full trade union freedom was granted, and not until March 1960 that this was given general and practical effect through an agreement with the employers' organisations.

The English-speaking territories.

As mentioned earlier, the ground was prepared for the growth of trade unions in British territories with the adoption of appropriate legislation in the '30's and the appointment of trade union advisers during the war years. The earliest steps were taken in West Africa, and by 1945 there were many well-established unions; national centres were set up in Sierra Leone (1943), and Nigeria and the Gold Coast (1945), while in Gambia a Labour Union which was in effect a national centre had been formed as early as 1935. In the East and Central African territories the development was rather slower: national centres were set up in Northern Rhodesia (1946), Sudan (1950), Kenya (1952), Tanganyika and Uganda (1955), Nyasaland (1956), Southern Rhodesia (1957) and Zanzibar (1959).

In contrast to those in the French-speaking territories, the unions and national centres in the English-speaking territories were established in the first

TRADE UNIONISM IN AFRICA AS A FACTOR IN NATION BUILDING

place on a unitary basis. This was a natural reflection of the situation in the metropolitan countries : the movement in Britain has never known any serious division on ideological or religious lines. It was not until after the All-African Peoples' Conference in November 1958 and the growth of Pan-African ideas (stimulated to some extent by external influences, as will be seen later) that fissiparous tendencies began to appear in the British territories too; the splits took place, significantly enough, almost invariably on the question of international affiliation. The most serious has been in Nigeria, where a movement of about 300,000 members (the strongest south of the Sahara) has been divided roughly in two between the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria, affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and the Pan-African orientated Nigerian T.U.C. Less important splits also took place, however, in Kenya, Nyasaland, Southern Rhodesia and Uganda, but in all these cases the main body of the movement has remained with the centres affiliated to the I.C.F.T.U.

The structure of the movement in these two main groups of African countries also bears other imprints of the different patterns of trade unionism proper to Britain and France. In the French territories the unions were fewer in number and general in character, each usually catering for a variety of trades or professions, with the main power concentrated at the level of the local federation. In British Africa a plethora of specialised craft and even company-based unions grew up, loosely grouped at the national level in rather weak central organisations.

Only in Ghana has there been a drastic reduction in the number of unions, and vastly increased powers granted to the central body; curiously enough, the inspiration for this change was variously attributed to the example of the German and Israeli movements. In fact however, it was a political move, enacted by legislation (1) rather than by the democratically expressed wishes of the membership, and obviously intended to bring the trade unions into line with the presidential type of government which Ghana had adopted.

South Africa and the Portuguese colonies.

The Republic of South Africa and the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea and Mozambique form a startling exception to the rest of the African continent, not only politically and constitutionally but also in respect of the trade union rights of Africans. This follows naturally from the political creed of the ruling Nationalist Party of South Africa which has elevated racial discrimination to the level of a constitutional principle and has sought to enforce it through a whole series of enactments known collectively as the 'apartheid' laws. The colonial labour policy of Portugal has also been based on racial principles.

(1) The Industrial Relations Act 1958. This has since been amended to provide for a common membership card for the unions and the ruling party (the Convention Peoples' Party), as well as the compulsory deduction of dues from wages.

In South Africa, the first local trade unions were set up by British and Dutch settlers well before the constitution of the Union of South Africa in 1900. Typical of much that was to follow was a strike of white miners at the Kimberley diamond mines in May 1884 against a regulation which required them to be stripped and searched after each shift. Their leader was shot and killed by a company official and armed strike-breakers then opened fire on 100 unarmed strikers, killing four and wounding about 40. The regulation was withdrawn, but nobody seemed to find it unusual that it should still be applied to African miners.

The history of trade unionism in South Africa continued in this atmosphere of sporadic violence and racial discrimination until a calmer climate — at least for the white workers — followed the introduction of the Industrial Conciliation Act in 1924. During the twenties and thirties successive efforts to form a united national centre failed, mainly on the question of including African unions, which had started to develop after the first world war. These unions had never been able to register under the Industrial Conciliation Act, and amendments to that act introduced in January 1957 provided, *inter alia*, for the break-up of racially mixed unions (i.e. unions with Asian and so-called « coloured » members as well as whites). Purely African unions are subject to other restrictions : strikes by Africans, for example, are totally forbidden under pain of a fine of £ 500, three years' imprisonment, or both, for those who organise or take part in them. Another weapon which has been used against various unions which do not enjoy the government's favour is the Suppression of Communism Act of 1951; this allows the appropriate minister to declare, without needing to produce evidence and without the right of appeal, that any person is a communist, and to ban him from holding any office, attending any public meeting or residing outside of a specified area.

At present the unions of South Africa are split into roughly three groups. On the one hand, there is a small group of white (mainly Afrikaans) unions which support the official 'apartheid' policy; in the middle is a larger group of white unions which do not accept that policy but have so far been unwilling to incur the disadvantages of deregistration if they break the law (2); and the African unions grouped in two rival organisations — the South African Congress of Trade Unions (which is in theory multiracial and has had connections with the communist World Federation of Trade Unions), associated with the African National Congress, and the Federation of Free African Trade Unions of South Africa, which has links with the Pan-African Congress, and is affiliated to the I.C.F.T.U. Neither of these two centres, or their constituent unions, has any legal standing and both have frequently been subjected to repressive measures.

So long as 'apartheid' remains the official policy of the Republic of South Africa (and the overwhelming condemnation of world opinion expressed in

(2) It is interesting to note that on the agenda of the annual conference (March, 1962) of this group (the S. A. Trade Union Council) there is a proposal from the Executive to amend the statutes to permit any " bona fide " union, instead of " registered " union as at present, to affiliate.

repeated resolutions of the U.N. general assembly appears to have produced no effect), the outlook for the normal development of trade unionism among the great majority of its citizens — the Africans — seems very sombre indeed.

In the Portuguese colonies, only Europeans and « assimilados » (the latter comprise less than one per cent of the non-European population) are legally permitted to join or form trade unions. Even these rights are strictly limited both in Portugal and its colonies, by a statute (3) which defines trade union aims, makes the election of management committees subject to official approval and revocation, forbids international affiliation, gives the competent minister power to dissolve unions for a variety of reasons, and lays down that collective agreements with employers are not valid without the approval and ratification of the minister of corporations. Another decree (4) prohibits strikes and lockouts.

“Non-assimilados” — i.e. the overwhelming majority of the indigenous populations — are expressly excluded by another order-in-council (5) from joining any trade union.

Following the outbreak of armed rebellion in Angola last year, a trade union organisation of exiles from that country — the General League of Angolan Workers (L.G.T.A.) — was established in Léopoldville, and was recently accepted into affiliation with the I.C.F.T.U. In a similar way to the Algerian organisation in exile, it aims not only at supporting the national liberation movement but also at training trade union officials with a view to building a trade union movement in an eventually independent Angola.

IMPEDIMENTS TO TRADE UNION GROWTH

The legal obstacles to the growth of indigenous trade unions in the French territories and the Belgian Congo have already been mentioned. They were removed in the French possessions south of the Sahara in 1945, although they persisted in Morocco until 1955, and in the Congo in 1957. In the British territories legal obstacles in the strict sense of the word disappeared well before the first world war, except in South Africa. This does not mean that the trade unions in all African countries have not had serious difficulties of a practical and administrative nature to surmount.

The first and most obvious difficulty is the general economic, social and cultural backwardness of the continent as a whole. So long as subsistence agriculture remains the main economic basis of any country there is clearly little scope for the growth of trade unions in the normally accepted sense of that term; in all African countries, the first unions grew up among public service and transport workers. The absence of a real economic base (6) for

(3) The National Labour Statute, established and supplemented by various orders-in-council of 23 September 1933.

(4) Order-in-council No. 23,870 of 18 May 1934.

(5) Order-in-council No. 39,660 of 20 May 1954 (Art. 23).

(6) The latest available UN statistics (1958) put the total population of Africa at about 195 million, while wage and salary earners may be estimated from I.L.O. and other sources at about 9 million.

a strong trade union movement has not, of course, diminished the appetite of the labour 'élite' to have one; and this is a factor, no less real for being psychological in nature, which cannot be ignored. It has however led to the failure of not a few attempts to build movements from the top, without a solid basis of local cadres capable of at least keeping elementary accounts and records. Administrative provisions, such as compulsory registration and the furnishing of annual returns, while no doubt introduced with the best of motives, have also in some cases acted as a brake on the growth of trade unions in conditions of semi-literacy.

In general however the most serious obstacles to the growth of trade unions in African countries have arisen, not so much from economic, cultural or administrative causes as from political difficulties. While they assumed their most acute and spectacular form in the colonial era, these difficulties have often persisted in a modified form in the newly independent states. The relations of trade unions to governments and political parties, both before and after independence, therefore merit closer examination.

TRADE UNIONS, GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

As in all colonial countries, the trade unions of Africa became involved in the struggle for independence at a fairly early stage. While the intellectual 'élite' may have provided the political leadership, it was the unions which furnished the shock troops whenever violent clashes with colonial governments became inevitable. Unlike India, where middle-class intellectuals produced the leadership not only for the nationalist political movement but also for the trade unions (and, in fact, largely continue to do so), where in effect the trade unions were created as a labour front of the nationalist movement, in Africa the unions joined this movement in their own right and indeed sometimes provided the political leadership themselves. There is nothing very remarkable about this; it simply stems from the relative weakness or even complete absence of an indigenous bourgeoisie in most African countries south of the Sahara. Nevertheless, it is a factor which is bound to have, and indeed in some cases has already had, important effects on the political balance of forces after independence.

The situation was somewhat different in North Africa, where the native intelligentsia was far more developed. There the nationalist parties undoubtedly inspired the creation of national trade union movements. Soon after the achievement of independence, however, there took place a polarisation of forces in the Moroccan nationalist party, the Istiqlal, which — as has already been noted — led to a split in that party and to the formation of a splinter trade union centre; the *Union Marocaine du Travail* now forms the backbone of the opposition party, the *Union Nationale des Forces Populaires*, which is committed to a policy of radical social reform. One effect of this split on the UMT has been that it has frequently been subject to official interference in the course of its legitimate trade union activities, and has twice had to appeal for the intervention of the I.C.F.T.U. In Tunisia, a similar split threatened in 1956 when the U.G.T.T. adopted a programme entailing structu-

ral changes in the economy, which clashed with the more pragmatic approach of the Neo-Destour Party. For a time the U.G.T.T. was actually split, but thanks to the statesmanship of President Bourguiba the integrity of the party was maintained. The final outcome was that the former general secretary of the U.G.T.T., Ahmed Ben Salah, joined the government, while the leadership of the labour organisation passed to a man who had sprung from the ranks of the workers, Ahmed Tili.

It would be extremely rash to attempt any forecast of possible similar developments in the independent Algeria which now seems on the point of emerging after seven years of blood and tears. What can be said for certain is that the U.G.T.A., whose members have borne the brunt of the struggle, has a programme of radical social reform very similar to those of the U.M.T. and the U.G.T.T. Whether that programme will in some form or other become government policy, as in Tunisia, or whether it is destined to form the platform of a future opposition, as in Morocco, is a question which only the future can answer.

In French-speaking Africa south of the Sahara the position is far too complex to attempt to describe it here in any detail. The salient fact is that, in face of the highly centralised, presidential types of government which have generally emerged, the trade union movement has so far been too dis-united to be able to exert the influence which it might otherwise expect to enjoy. The tragedy is that the grounds of dissension, when not purely personal, have related mostly to ideological and religious differences which have little or no bearing on the economic and social problems facing these countries. It is to be hoped that the continental unity recently achieved at the Dakar conference (see below) between free and democratic unions of varying outlook from all parts of Africa may eventually be translated into practice at the national level too. The monolithic unity which apparently characterises the trade unions of Guinea — and of Ghana, too, for that matter — is more illusory than real, having been imposed by the ruling party. Revealing gaps were torn in this façade recently in both countries by widespread strike movements which the national trade union centres were unable to control and which were suppressed only by drastic police measures.

As for the other English-speaking West African countries, the situation in Nigeria is rather similar to that in the French speaking : lack of unity has deprived an otherwise strong movement of much of its potential influence. It is interesting to note that the federal government itself took the initiative in seeking to effect a reconciliation some months ago, but this failed owing to the insistence of the N.T.U.C. faction on disaffiliation from international organisations as a prior condition (7). Sierra Leone is probably unique in West Africa as the only country which has managed to keep a united trade union movement from the outset.

(7) How serious this condition was may be judged from the fact that, when it was posed, several N.T.U.C. leaders had just returned from a W.F.T.U. world congress in Moscow.

It could be that one of the reasons for the general lack of unity in the movements of both English- and French speaking West Africa is that independence has been achieved there in the main by peaceful means and that the centrifugal tendencies inherent in any democratic society have consequently had full play. Whatever the reasons, the long-term test of the maturity of the African trade union movement will be its ability to achieve unity on a democratic basis and without recourse to totalitarian methods : a dictum which is equally valid, of course, for some highly developed European countries.

In the British territories of East and Central Africa the trade unions have, as elsewhere, been closely associated with national independence movements from an early stage in their existence. Although in no territory were the unions ever banned as such, many of their leaders and active members fell foul of the authorities, and normal activities were brought to a halt indirectly through the operation of emergency regulations in times of exceptional tension. This was the case in Kenya during the Mau Mau uprising which started in 1952, and in Nyasaland and the Rhodesias in 1959 during the agitation against the Central African Federation, which was, and still is, considered by the African nationalists in those territories as a device for perpetuating colonial rule). Otherwise relations were as amicable as might be expected between governments and trade unions which were eager not only to secure substantial wage rises for their members (many of whom happened to be government employees), but also to take over the functions of government itself at the earliest convenient opportunity. As for the latter ambition the British government from about 1959 onwards did not go out of its way actively to discourage it; on the contrary, it appointed trade union leaders to some of the commissions and conferences set up to formulate recommendations on the terms and timing of self-government and independence (8). And in the first East African territory to achieve self-government, Tanganyika, the general secretary of the Tanganyika Federation of Labour, Rashidi Kawawa, was appointed minister for local government and housing in 1960, and later deputy prime minister; shortly after the achievement of full independence at the end of last year, he replaced Julius Nyerere as prime minister.

The performance of Kawawa as prime minister of Tanganyika will be followed with special attention by all who have the interests of African labour at heart. For he is the first African trade unionist to take charge of a government in more or less normal circumstances : the situation which Cyrille Adoula found on his accession to the premiership of the Congo was from the constitutional, political, economic and financial points of view quite abnormal even by African standards : while Sekou Touré was first and foremost a politician. Some commentators have depicted Nyerere as the "moderate" who has been overthrown by the "extremist labour agitator" Kawawa. In fact

(8) The late Lawrence Katilungu, then president of the Northern Rhodesian TUC and of its African Mineworkers' Union was a member of the Monckton Commission on the future of Central African Federation; Tom Mboya, general secretary of the Kenya Federation of Labour is a member of the present London constitutional conference on the future of Kenya (March 1962).

TRADE UNIONISM IN AFRICA AS A FACTOR IN NATION BUILDING

the latter is just as well aware as his predecessor of the economic limitations of a country with some 300.000 wage and salary earners out of a total population of about nine million. He is known, however, to be an advocate of speedier Africanisation of the public services, and there may well be an accelerated programme adopted in this connection.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF AFRICAN UNIONS

Reference has already been made to the development of regional groupings in the French-speaking territories, as well as in passing to the impact of Pan-African ideas and the connections of some African unions with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions and the World Trade Union Federation. Since these external relations have played such an important part in the growth of African trade unionism, and may even have contributed — through the kind of sub-conscious “love-hate” mechanism well known to psycho-analysts — to the more xenophobic manifestations of Pan-Africanism in that movement, it would seem advisable to examine them more systematically.

The pioneer work in establishing connections and extending moral and material support to African trade unions (as indeed to those in other colonial territories) was started by the British T.U.C. in the inter-war years. When official recognition came and the British government started appointing trade union advisers to colonial labour departments from 1940 onwards, this was normally done on the recommendation of the T.U.C.

In the French-speaking territories there was a certain increase in trade union membership after the war (9). The unions were organised in the first place as branches of metropolitan national centres (the communist C.G.T., the socialist C.G.T.-F.O. and the Christian C.F.T.C.), none of which at that time looked with much favour on the idea of independent indigenous African unions. It was not until the middle fifties and particularly after the introduction of the “Loi cadre” in 1956, which foreshadowed the development of self-government in the African territories, that African unions began to break away from the tutelage of the French organisations. The latter accepted that development with some reluctance (as was also the case somewhat later in the Belgian Congo). This attitude was in marked contrast to the relations which had grown up from a very early stage between the unions in the British territories and the British T.U.C. The latter, in fact, had recognised the right to self-determination in the trade union field long before any British government had come round to that view at the constitutional level.

Relations — organic or otherwise — thus existed between African unions and metropolitan centres prior to the establishment of any links between African unions themselves. As noted earlier, starting from 1956 all three French metropolitan centres established organisations linking their unions in

(9) A decree of 7 August 1944 extended trade union rights to all African territories; these rights were given more systematic expression in the Overseas Labour Code of 1952.

the various French territories. None of these bodies, however, survived the political break-up of the French territories, except the Christian organisation, which took in Congolese (Léopoldville) and Madagascar unions and in 1959 changed its title to the Pan-African Union of Believing Workers.

The first conference on a more or less all-African basis took place under I.C.F.T.U. auspices in Accra in January 1957, on the eve of Ghana's independence.

It received the blessing of the then prime minister (later president), Kwame Nkrumah; he welcomed outside assistance, but insisted that African trade unionism should not be a copy of European or American patterns. The conference recommended that area committees be set up for North, West, and East, Central and Southern Africa prior to the formation of an all-African regional organisation.

Subsequent efforts to build an I.C.F.T.U. regional organisation ran into some difficulties. The four North African affiliates (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) wished to defer the formation of a formal area committee until Algeria achieved independence and the idea of a Maghreb federation could materialise. The East, Central and Southern Area Committee was set up in Nairobi in July 1958 with Tom Mboya of Kenya as president and Serge Clavier of Mauritius as secretary. In the West, however, the Ghana T.U.C., then the strongest affiliate in the area (the Nigerians affiliated later), blocked any progress on the pretext of the fluid situation in the French territories and continued to do so until it finally left the I.C.F.T.U. in December 1959.

Meanwhile, the first All-African Peoples' Conference (Accra, November 1958) had taken place and launched the idea of a neutralist grouping under the leadership of Guinea, Ghana, Morocco and Egypt. Intense efforts were exerted by the governments of these countries to secure acceptance of the same alignment in the trade union field, and trade union questions figured largely on the agenda of the second All-African Peoples' Conference (Tunis, November 1960). These endeavours culminated in the formation at Casablanca in May 1961 of the All-African Trade Union Federation. Its membership has remained confined to the original four or five sponsoring organisations of the Casablanca block. Having failed to make any inroads on the I.C.F.T.U. or Christian organisations, it can at most be said to have had a certain nuisance value through its constant propagation of "neutralist" ideas from behind the Pan-African stalking horse.

It did, however, help to catalyse unity of purpose among the free trade union forces: 21 I.C.F.T.U., 12 Christian and 8 independent organisations came together at Dakar in January 1962 to found the African Trade Union Confederation. The president of the new body is Ahmed Tlili of Tunisia and the secretary David Soumah, president of the African Christian confederation. Member organisations have full freedom to decide their own international affiliation. The I.C.F.T.U. and Christian regional bodies will continue their separate existence, but, judging from the wide area of agreement reached and the choice of officers at Dakar, the fullest collaboration between all three free trade union bodies in Africa may be confidently expected.

AFRICAN LABOUR AS A FORCE FOR DEMOCRACY

In all countries in which the trade union movement has been able to develop normally it has served as a veritable school of democracy. If the British working man, after his enfranchisement in the eighties, was able to use his newly won political power in a responsible way, that was very largely due to the grounding in democratic ideals and methods which he had acquired through membership of a trade union. Those unions had been developing over a period of nearly a hundred years, however; in Africa there are very few countries where trade unions have been in existence for as long as twenty years before the advent of independence. Making due allowance for this telescoping of historical development which is typical of present-day Africa, there is no reason to suppose that, where they are allowed to, African unions can not exercise a similar enlightening influence in fitting the workers for the political responsibilities of sovereign nationhood. They will only be able to do this insofar as they are able to operate as free and democratic institutions untrammelled by government control or the tutelage of political parties. When this is not the case, and the ruling party seeks to regiment the unions, the appearance of monolithic national unity may be temporarily upheld; it is always liable to be rudely shattered, however, when in the absence of any democratic safety valve the workers take direct action, as was demonstrated by the recent waves of strikes in Ghana and Guinea.

The central problem which faces all the newly independent peoples of Africa, as indeed of all the developing regions, is how to achieve essential economic development without sacrificing those principles of freedom and democracy in the name of which they claimed and won their independence. This dilemma and its attendant dangers have frequently been discussed in the pages of this review. They therefore need no detailed restatement here, but rather assessment of what contribution may be expected in their solution from the trade unions of Africa.

One fact can be extracted with tolerable certainty from the maze of speculation which obscures the African political scene. It is that the free trade union forces, whose political maturity was clearly demonstrated at the recent Dakar conference, are prepared to co-operate to the full in lifting their countries out of the economic and social rut in which they have too long stagnated provided that basic human rights are respected in the process. This is surely the essential point, and in proof thereof we cannot do better in conclusion than to quote from a recent article by Ahmed Tlili, the Tunisian president of the new African Trade Union Confederation:

“Now that Africa is well on the way to total liberation — the majority of its peoples have already secured their independence — its main task must be to avoid falling prey to anarchy and demagoguery. It must satisfy the aspirations of its peoples for freedom, democracy and prosperity, and spare them the long years of economic stagnation which have been the lot of certain countries in Latin America and Asia, already victims of chronic political divisions and instability. If the trade unions throw themselves into the fight for col-

JOHN RIDDELL

lective and individual rights and refuse to compromise on principles, they can play a vital role in the building of the new Africa and in determining the course it is to follow.

"The aim must be to build and consolidate truly democratic institutions, to ensure that justice operates at all levels of the administrative system, and to co-ordinate all our efforts for the public good (10)."

(10) "African trade unionism and the rights of the individual", *Free Labour World*, Nos. 139/140 1962, p. 26.

NOTES

NOTES

Some Traditionally Based Forms of Mutual Aid in West African Urbanization

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The modern growth of West African towns is due mainly to the migration of tribal people from the rural areas, and in this process an important part is played by voluntary associations based upon the common origin, real or supposed, of their members. The study of these tribal unions and associations reveals with particular clarity the functions as well as the persistence of traditionally rooted institutions within the urban environment. It shows how, in the absence of actual ties of close kinship and marriage, a fictional bond is created which is in many ways a substitute for customary methods of providing mutual aid and moral support (Little 1957). Such associations, comprising individuals brought up in a homogeneous culture with a common interest in their place of origin, hold out considerable opportunities of friendship, sympathy, and solace and help the migrant in various practical ways.

These, however, are not his only needs. He may indeed eschew the companionship of people outside his own tribe, but as a member of a multi-tribal community some adjustment to strangers is unavoidable, if only at work. Especially if the migrant is a trader, success in business will depend upon his or her having amicable relations not only with customers but with fellow traders. Moreover, life in the town—the experience of meeting fellow tribesmen who have prospered, of seeing and participating in new activities, of witnessing fresh sights—creates new interests and new needs which are the more readily generated because of the original impulse to migration itself. In West Africa today, a young man or young woman does not require the stimulus of education to arouse ambition. Social change is multifarious enough to suggest ways in which even an illiterate person can better himself.

In addition, therefore, to forming tribal associations, many newcomers to the town feel the desire to satisfy a variety of needs which are more specifically related to their business or occupation, to their personal ambitions, even to an interest in religion or recreation. They form further associations to cater to these needs—associations which are as characteristically “traditional” from the point of view of many of their practices and organization as tribal unions, but designed to serve the particular economic, occupational, social, or religious interests of their members.

MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES

It will be convenient to begin with associations formed for the purpose of helping their members to save money or to provide mutual benefit. In 1954 there were some 70 societies of this kind in existence in Accra. They had a total membership of 26,192 persons, of whom 23,406 were females and 2,786 males, representing about 75 per cent of all females of nineteen years and over and 10 per cent of all adult males (Acquah 1958).

Some of the Accra societies had been in existence for more than 30 years, and, unlike tribal unions and rural occupational organizations, most of them are open to all comers, irrespective also of religion. All of them, at the time they were studied, gave assistance to members in sickness and bereavement and donated sums of money to the kinsfolk of a deceased member. In addition, some gave financial assistance to members when they were robbed, when they became involved in a court case, and at the birth of a child. Benefits ranged as follows: sickness, from 4s. to £1, 1s. a month; bereavement, from 10s., 6d. to £7, 7s.; death of a member, from £2, 2s. to more than £26. In the case of a death of a member, the majority of the societies gave a lump sum only, which was intended to pay for the coffin of the deceased member. In the case of the outdooring ceremony, which takes place shortly after a child is born, friends and relatives give donations to the parents which are supplemented by donations from the society. These societies are also in the habit of making periodic collections to provide a lump sum to each member in rotation (see later description of *Nanemei Akpee*). This form of capital raising provides a ready sum of money which may be used to acquire goods for trading, to build a house, or to obtain some other desired object.¹ Collections are made weekly or fortnightly, when donations are demanded from members, and those who cannot attend are expected to send their contribution to the treasurer. The rule is that if A gives 4s. for B, then B is expected to give 4s. when a collection is made for A. Some of these collections amount to more than £200.

The social activities of these Accra associations include excursions and picnics; concerts, singing, dancing, and drumming; religious talks and discussions, literacy classes, debates, and cinema shows; first-aid service; initiation ceremonies for new members; and the laying of wreaths on graves of former members. The expense is met out of regular dues ranging from 3d. to 4s. per week, which pay for such things as rent, light, books, stamps, cups, forms, flags, banners, drums, messengers, tables, and, in some cases, honoraria to secretaries. In addition, collections are made for money required for the various forms of assistance rendered to members, and for the help which more than half the societies studied extend to the wider public, especially the socially handicapped. Members take presents of money and in kind to hospitals and prisons and to other institutions where the inmates may be in need of advice or encouragement (Aquah 1953).

The constitution and by-laws of one of these societies provide an

indication of their organization in general. This society, which calls itself *Yehowa Kpee* (Society of God), has a president and seven or eight other officials, each of whom has his own duties in the administration. *Yehowa Kpee*'s primary aim is "to foster the spirit of friendship amongst its members." It also undertakes to help its members with their financial and other problems and to arrange for them to receive medical treatment from a particular doctor in Accra. Members are expected not only to pay their dues and attend meetings of the society punctually and regularly, but also to refrain from disorderly behavior both in the society and outside it in the town. All these matters are the subject of disciplinary rules, which include the society's right to expel a member if he refuses to mend his conduct after being warned a number of times. A member absenting himself from meetings for three consecutive months without permission is suspended and is not readmitted to the benefits of membership until he has made up all his arrears of dues (Aquah 1953).

In Freetown, friendly societies of a somewhat similar kind are very popular among the Creoles, and some of them slightly resemble tribal unions in being groups of common ancestry. There are, for example, the Nova Scotia and Maroons Descendants Association, the Popo Maintenance Society, and another called the Hand to Mott Society (transcribing the Creole pronunciation of "mouth"). In addition to the tribal associations *per se*, the Moslem section of the tribal population also run societies of a benefit nature and the congregations of the mosques usually have what is loosely called a "*Jama compin*" (*compin* being the Creole word for "company"). The secretary of the Jama keeps a list of contributors, who pay 6d. per head on the death of any member's relative (Banton 1957).

Women, as well as men, are active in this way. Upcountry in Sierra Leone there is the Bo United Moslem Women's Society, which collects a small weekly subscription; persons joining as new members have to provide the equivalent of what a foundation member has already paid in subscriptions. This money is used to help members who are ill or who have expenses in connection with the burial of a relative; some of it is also disbursed as alms. The leader of the society is the Mammy Queen, the present holder of this office being an elderly woman who speaks the languages of at least six of the tribes locally resident in the town. There are a number of additional officials, part of whose duty it is to intervene in domestic quarrels and attempt to reconcile man and wife. The society has disciplinary rules and expels any of its members who are constant troublemakers in the home. It takes a prominent part as a group in Moslem festivals and stages formal receptions for co-religionists returning from the pilgrimage to Mecca. On such occasions its members appear in *aso-ebi*, which is the practice of a group of people, who are friends or members of the same association, of wearing the same form of dress and accessories—for women head-tie, necklace, and sandals (Little 1951: 223).

A very wide range of somewhat similar associations help their

members to save; quite often, these societies also provide a means of obtaining credit and serve as a form of insurance. Perhaps the best known of the latter kind of institution is *esusu*, apparently of Yoruba origin, which is found nowadays all over West Africa under slightly different names, e.g., *asusu* in Freetown, *susu* in Kumasi, and *ozuzu* in southeastern Nigeria. Traditionally, *esusu* groups seem to have been restricted very largely to men and women belonging to the same compound, but this is no longer the case, and *esusu* groups are particularly common among people working in the same office, workshop, or school. *Esusu* is also widely prevalent among market women.

Basically, according to Bascom (1952: 63-64), "the *esusu* is a fund to which a group of individuals make fixed contributions of money at stated intervals; the total amount contributed by the entire group is assigned to each of the members in rotation." The number of contributors, the size of the contributions, and the length of the intervals at which they are made vary from one group to another. For example, suppose twenty members were to contribute one shilling each, monthly. At the end of twenty months, which completes the cycle in this case, each member will have contributed twenty shillings and will on one occasion have received this amount in return. There is neither gain nor loss, but the advantage to the members is that they have available a large sum of money with which to make expensive purchases or to meet debts of considerable size. Furthermore, an attempt is made to pay the fund to members at times when they have special need of it. Anyone who wishes to do so may found an *esusu* group, provided that the others are willing to entrust their money to him. He simply announces his proposal to his friends, and those who wish to join indicate their intention. They, in turn, inform their acquaintances of the proposed *esusu*, thus drawing additional members into the circle. The larger groups are divided into four or more subgroups or "roads" (first, second, third, fourth) according to the order in which they receive the fund, which is rotated among the subgroups in turn. Friends of the founder who have applied directly to him for admission become heads of the "roads" and may be made responsible for collecting the contributions and making the disbursement within their subgroups.

It has been argued (Bascom 1952) that the *esusu* differs from a club in that many *esusu* groups hold no meetings and that the members frequently are not known to one another. However, it is possible that, nowadays, the group concerned is generally a simple association of friends or acquaintances with a common interest in raising funds for business, such as trading. A small number of members permits a rapid rotation and there is less possibility of one of the group defaulting.² For example, in an *esusu* group organized in a Kumasi school, only six out of the twelve teachers on the staff belonged to the group. The contribution was £5 per month, which meant that each member received £25 twice a year from the *esusu* (Bandoh Ms).

OCCUPATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

In addition to raising money through credit institutions, such as *esusu*, Nigerian market women also form associations, known as *egbes*,³ to control the supply or price of commodities in which their members trade. Some of the larger markets have a woman in charge, spoken of as their "mother," and each of the various sections which monopolize the sale of a particular commodity, e.g., yams, gari, or cloth, is also headed by a "mother," who represents them in relation to customers and the market authorities. In Lagos market, where the women sit according to the commodities in which they deal, each such section had its own *egbe*, which discourages competition between women trading in the particular commodity. It is said to be unthinkable for a woman to disobey her market *egbe* in this matter; any woman who undercuts is boycotted by her fellow traders, who may even take a case against her to the market and town officials. Sometimes, market *egbes* also attempt to buy in bulk for their members, thus obtaining produce from the farmers at a cheaper rate and saving the overheads of buyers (Baker Ms; Comhaire-Sylvaine 1951).

Associations of women traders in Ghana have also been formed with similar objectives. For example, there is a Foodstuff Sellers Union at Sekondi whose members, mostly women, include sellers of corn, plantains, palm-nuts, yams, rice, etc. Its original aim was to amalgamate traders of all these crops, and it tried to restrict buying and selling of them at the market to its members only. This did not gain official support. The Union therefore failed in its main economic objective, but it has succeeded in fulfilling various social purposes. In addition to assisting its members to recover debts due to them, it has settled disputes among them and given them help at funerals. On the death of a member, contributions are raised, and the Union provides a ring for the deceased and refreshment for the mourners. Somewhat similarly, the Bread Sellers Union failed in its objective of acquiring flour and sugar wholesale from the importing firms for distribution among its own members. It continues to exist, however, because its members help one another at funerals. The main activity of the Fish Sellers Union also seems to be connected with funerals. This association consists entirely of women and is said to have a membership of 300, covering all fish sellers at Sekondi and two neighboring towns. Members pay an entrance fee of 2s. per head. It has a "chief," a "spokesman," and "elders" who settle disputes, most of which relate to debts owed to members. In addition to these social activities, some of the members of the union club together in fours and sixes to raise money to buy fishing nets, which are sold to the fishermen on agreed terms. A fisherman who receives a net sells his catch during the fishing season to the creditor group, and value of the fish is reckoned against the net. If a fisherman is able to pay for the net in one season, it becomes his own, but he continues to sell his catch to his former creditors, who now become his regular customers. In

this way, the women are able to obtain the fish on which their livelihood depends (Busia 1950: 25-26).

The Yam Sellers Association in Kumasi is another women's organization which tries to combine economic with social purposes. This association makes loans of up to £50 to traders who need help in their purchase and transport of yams from the farms where the produce is grown some 100 miles north of Kumasi. Members of the association pay £5 for admission, and the entrance fees of some 150 members provide it with capital for the season. In addition, 10 per cent interest, payable at the end of the season, is charged on every loan. Members also try to help each other in time of sickness and death. In the former event the association provides £2 as a token of sympathy for the sick person, and £5 is handed over by the representatives of the society to the family of a deceased member. The association also sends three members to represent it at the wake and subsequent funeral (Bandoh Ms).

In addition, women associate for industrial purposes. In southern Nigeria, for example, there are women's societies which run a bakery, a laundry, a calabash factory, and a gari mill. One of the most interesting associations of this kind, the Egba Women's Union in Abeokuta, claims a membership of 80,000 women, paying subscriptions of 1s. a year. It operates as a weaving corporation and runs a maternity and a child welfare clinic, as well as conducting classes for illiterate women (Hodgkin 1956: 90).

Other occupational and professional associations are concerned with the status and remuneration of their members as workers. In Sekondi, for example, there are unions of carpenters, shoemakers, drivers, seamen, sugar sellers, cooks and stewards, etc., all of which also offer their members, as a principal benefit, the assurance of a decent burial (Busia 1950: 27). There are also modern crafts such as goldsmiths, tinkers, gunsmiths, tailors, and barbers, as well as certain trade unions, which, unlike Government sponsored trade unions, have come spontaneously into being. One example of these is the Motor Drivers' Union at Keta, which is now a branch of a nationwide union negotiating freight rates, working conditions, and so on. This differs from European trade unions in being an association of small entrepreneurs owning their own vehicles rather than an association of employees. Its main purpose is to look after the interests of drivers generally and, in particular, to offer them legal assistance and insurance. When a driver is convicted, the Union tries as far as possible to pay his fine; and when a driver dies, the Union provides part of the funeral expenses. There are also smaller sickness and accident benefits. The entrance fee is 14s. and there is a monthly subscription of 1s. The Union also organizes meetings and dances (Carey Ms).

Women's unions of a less usual kind, which are also concerned with the status and remuneration of their members, are associations of prostitutes. These have been reported from Sekondi, where there is said to be a strong comradeship among the groups concerned, their union providing the security of a befitting funeral celebration and

burial (Busia 1950: 108). Further information about the organization of the union is lacking, but it is probably very similar to that of prostitutes' associations in Brazzaville. In the latter city, the members try to improve their social and economic position by insisting on a high standard of dress and deportment, and by ostracizing women who are too casual or too free with their sexual favours. Each association has its own name, such as *Etoile*, *La Rose*, *Jeunesse*, or *Diamant*, and is under a leader, an elderly woman, who can set a pattern of elegance and sophistication. Membership is limited and is regulated by a committee. There is also a common fund out of which members in financial straits are helped and their funeral expenses paid should they die. In the latter event, the society behaves as if it were the family of the deceased; that is to say, every girl goes into mourning, giving up her jewelry and finer clothes for six months, and at the end there is a night-long celebration in some "bar-dancing" establishment hired for the occasion (Balandier 1955: 145-188).

Various crafts have also been incorporated into associations. Their development under urban conditions is interesting because of the combination of modern functions and principles of organization with features deeply rooted in the indigenous culture. For example, in the indigenous economy of Keta in Ghana each trade or occupation traditionally had a chief practitioner who settled disputes and represented his associates in relation to outsiders. This is still the custom today, but, in addition, the larger trades have adopted more formal principles of organization, while the scope of their functions and interests has been widened. Thus, in 1947, the goldsmiths, until then a loosely organized group of craftsmen, decided to turn themselves into a local branch of a nation-wide union centered at Accra. They hoped in this way to assure themselves of larger quantities of gold, the supply of which is controlled and regulated by the Government. This step necessitated a few changes of traditional organization, including the election of the chief goldsmith as Life Chairman and the appointment of an educated man as President. The chief goldsmith had long looked after the interests of all members of his craft and enjoyed a good deal of prestige among them. However, as he was only semi-literate and unable to speak English, doubt was felt about his ability to deal adequately with headquarters at Accra. He continues, nevertheless, to arbitrate in disputes both between members and between goldsmiths and the public, while cases which have gone to the urban court are often referred to him by the magistrates for settlement. In other words, the chief goldsmith retains his traditional functions and regards himself as the "owner" of the union. When he dies, his office will probably pass down to his eldest brother or to one of his sons. The President, on the other hand, is freely elected by all goldsmiths on the basis of organizing ability and education, and his office is not confined to any particular family (Carey Ms).

This goldsmiths' union has a small entrance fee and monthly subscriptions, and it provides the usual form of funeral benefit. It also concerns itself with standards of workmanship; in order to obtain

a license as a goldsmith a man must have learned his trade from a practicing craftsman as well as show evidence of skill. The union has also laid down a detailed price list, but this is out of date, and in practice each goldsmith is left free to make as much or as little profit as the market will bear (Carey Ms).

The carpenters' union includes all the hundred or so practitioners of this trade at Keta. There is an *ad hoc* entrance fee, and each man gives as much as he feels he can afford. There are no fixed sickness benefits, but when a carpenter falls ill and goes to a hospital, the practice is for some of his colleagues, often including the chief carpenter, to visit him and offer him the contents of their purses. If he dies, wood is supplied by his family and made into a coffin for him by his colleagues free of charge. They also take a collection for the funeral expenses. In addition to the chief carpenter, there is an executive committee of twelve, including a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer, which meets three times a month to discuss matters of interest to the union. The secretary and the treasurer are literate and able to speak English, but the president's own lack of education often obliges him to use his educated son as a spokesman. His job as chief carpenter largely consists of settling disputes between union members and more frequently between carpenters and the public; when, for example, a carpenter, having taken an advance, fails to complete the work in the time required, the customer can complain to the chief carpenter. The latter then looks into the matter and tries arbitration. The majority of disputes are settled informally in this way and are not taken to court (Carey Ms).

In the traditional craft industries among the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, a father hands on his knowledge and skill to his sons, thus making some crafts the preserve of certain lineages. The sudden impact of Western technology did not give craftsmen an opportunity to adapt their work to the new machines and tools. New men were recruited who had never been craftsmen, so that, today, the numerous tailors, carpenters, builders, and their like are united to their fellow workers by bonds of economic agreement whereby their work is strictly regulated. The lineage no longer supplies the structure of the craft organization. It has been replaced by a system of guilds which strikingly resembles craft organizations in medieval Europe, and the lineage merely retains responsibility for the crafts practiced before the advent of the European (Lloyd 1953: 30-34).

The initiative in forming a guild came from the workers themselves and not from kings or chiefs. One craftsman would visit his fellow workers and call a meeting of them, at which rules and regulations were drafted. The first rule of all guilds is that every craftsman, whether master, journeyman, or apprentice, must register with the guild, must attend meetings, and must pay his dues. Failure to register can lead to confiscation of the tools of the offender. There is a system for training apprentices, who, unlike the traditional craftsmen, often work away from home. The father or guardian of the boy will sign a contract with the master stating the length of the appren-

ticeship and the fee payable, the scale of premium usually being laid down by the guild. If the master is literate, he may teach the boy, who is usually between the ages of fifteen and twenty, the rudiments of reading and writing in addition to the trade. All the work done by the boy belongs to the master, and the apprentice receives no remuneration for what he does. When a boy first joins his master he will be introduced to the guild, the members of which are the arbiters in any dispute between him and his master. At the end of the apprenticeship there is a small ceremony for which the boy's father must provide refreshment for the members of the guild assembled, and the boy is blessed by the guild head, who reads him its laws. Wage rates are fixed by the guild according to the type of work done, and within a town the craftsmen are able to maintain the set prices. No objection, however, is raised to their charging friends and relatives less, nor does the guild mind if a rich customer can be persuaded to pay a higher rate. At the same time, the guild tries to maintain a reasonable standard of work in the craft, and it protects the customer against the craftsman who receives an advance payment for his work and then fails, without good reason, to complete the contract and is unable to refund the money. It also stops members from stealing work from each other. If a guild member is accused by some person outside the guild, and, in the opinion of the guild, the charges are unfounded, the guild will intercede on his behalf, and the members' contributions will be used to fight the case in the King's Court.

In judging cases between its own members the guild orders one or both parties to the dispute to pay a fine, which is used to buy beer for consumption at the meeting. There is a heavier fine if disrespect is shown to the guild head. The latter may be the eldest man practicing the craft; or the first man to practice in that particular town; or he may be elected by the members and have neither of these qualifications. There is also a secretary, who is often the one member of the guild who is literate in either Yoruba or English. Both these officials are unpaid, although a small weekly contribution is usually levied to cover the normal running expenses of the guild (Lloyd 1953).

The guild member still retains full membership in his lineage and suffers no disabilities by joining another organization. Guild meetings are often occasions for conviviality; and members help financially with each other's family ceremonies and celebrations. However, most forms of social security are still organized by the lineage, not by the guild. The latter does not undertake to care for its members in sickness or old age; nor does it function as a bank, lending money to members for tools. On the other hand, though it does not interest itself in disputes over a member's land or over his wives, the seduction of the wife of a fellow craftsman is condemned lest it cause enmity within the guild (Lloyd 1953).

SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

A large number of traditionally based associations exist for recreational as well as sociable purposes. The simplest example is the

Yoruba women's friendship group, which, like the occupational associations mentioned above, is known by the generic term *egbe*. This consists of six to twelve persons who are kinsfolk, neighbors, and close friends and maintain a high degree of intimacy. The women who initiate it are given such titles, nowadays, as president and secretary. Many such *egbes* are organized for entertainment purposes only. The women concerned meet in one another's houses or sit in the compound outside, organize convivial gatherings, and support each other at funerals, weddings, baptisms, etc., as well as saving up as a group for outings in other towns. Most of their activities take place after the cocoa harvest, i.e., at the time of the year when there is most money about. At a party or any other kind of suitable social gathering they may hire drummers and dance outside the house of the host, who is expected to give them money. They may also visit each other's relatives for similar purposes, collecting money from the women of the compounds concerned as they go on their convivial round. As mentioned above, this kind of friendly relationship is symbolized by the wearing of *aso-ebi*. The members of the group say of each other: "She is like a sister to me; we are of the same *egbe*."

Similarly, there are many small groups which organize dances on holidays in Freetown. Most of them have no permanent organization and consist, like the Yoruba women's *egbe*, of a number of friends and acquaintances meeting for this purpose. For example, there is a women's benefit and dancing group which is named *Segbura* after a calabash with beads tied to it that is used as a musical instrument. The so-called "medicine societies" of various tribes also provide a good deal of more or less impromptu amusement, including *Goboi* (a non-sacred spirit of the Poro society) which parades the town attended by another called the *Yamama* and by a group of people who take their name *Sangba* from the drum they use. Another masked performer, the *Congoli*, walks the streets with a long stick, a black mask, and a plentiful covering of straw. Other comparable groups, each with its masked performer, include the *Tumla* of the Temne, the *Tiamba* of the Baga, and the *Nabu* of the Limba. The dancing of these "spirits" consists largely of mime, and spectators are expected to reward them with money (Banton 1957: 187).

A number of Ewe drumming companies active in Ghana towns also retain much of their traditional character. They are normally organized on a ward basis, there being three companies in every ward. The first comprises children; the second, "young men"; and the third, "elders," i.e., the male population over the age of 30 or so. Actually, both men and women belong to drumming companies; but the leaders are always men, and the women confine themselves to dancing and singing. Leadership of a senior drumming company usually rests in the hands of two or three men, who are always among the oldest members. The leaders of the middle company are selected from the senior company, while the junior company in turn selects leaders belonging to the middle company. Drumming is associated with public occasions and with various crises in the individual's life cycle,

especially his funeral. At times, all three companies of a ward cooperate, but more often only one is used for any particular occasion. When an old man dies, for example, only the senior company will drum, whereas the middle company is primarily concerned with the funeral of a young man, and so on. If the dead man has been a leader of a drumming company, a special collection is held toward his funeral expenses, but ordinarily company members only contribute by virtue of their membership in the ward (Carey Ms).

As a rule, these drumming companies confine their activities to their own ward. Nowadays, however, they compete with each other for public appreciation, and those with special skill become well known and may be employed by outsiders on special occasions. The result is that a few very well-known companies are no longer recruited on a ward basis, but accept only highly skilled and experienced drummers for membership. While their "traditional" functions have to some extent been retained, the companies at this stage resemble voluntary associations of semi-professional entertainers who travel about the country in search of engagements.⁴

In fact, there are many voluntary associations which began as simple dancing or drumming companies in tribal society. Under urban conditions some of them have developed a relatively complex organization and a modern set of objectives. The dancing *compin* of Sierra Leone is a striking example of this kind of phenomenon. This is a group of young men and women concerned with the performance of "plays" of traditional music and dancing, as well as with the raising of money for mutual benefit. The music is provided mainly by native drums, calabash rattles, and xylophones, and is accompanied by singing. The dancing, which, like the music, shows strong signs of Western influence, is somewhat reminiscent of English country dancing, but it varies with the *compin* concerned. A "play" is generally given in connection with some important local event, and the general public are expected to donate money to the *compin* on these occasions. Money is also collected in the form of weekly subscriptions from the members and is used to help them in sickness or bereavement.

In the case of *compins* known as *Ambas Geda* (*ambas*, "we have," and *geda*, "together"), the play starts with a line of four men and four women circling the floor to a slow tempo. A whistle is then blown, and the men and women separate so that they dance opposite one another, several yards apart. In the next phase, they dance up to one another, right hand to right, left to left, backing and advancing; then they change places and repeat this much in the way of English square dancing (indeed the dance of one company markedly resembles "The Lancers"). After more whistle blasts any persons present may come on the floor, where they dance together in mixed couples in what is said to be a ballroom fashion and to a much faster tempo. This is an obvious departure from traditional dancing. The dancers are given items of clothing by their admirers in the audience and wear these on the head or over the shoulders for the rest of the dance. Members of

the audience also enter the ring to place coins between the lips of the dancers, who, in turn, allow the money to drop from their mouths on to a plate carried round for this purpose by one of the company's officials. This is a form of conspicuous consumption as well as a method of donating money to the society. Women spectators may also rise to wipe the sweat from the faces of male dancers whom they particularly like. Most of the songs the women sing are in honor of the company itself or of its founder, and praise songs⁵ are also sung in order to flatter some local notable or to persuade rich onlookers to contribute funds (Banton 1957: 173).

These dancing *compins* are particularly numerous among Temne and Mandinka immigrants in Freetown. The principal Temne association apart from *Ambas Geda* is the *Alimania*. The best known Mandinka society is the *Taransis*. Other groups, mostly modeled on *Ambas Geda*, have taken Arabic words for their names, e.g., *Nuru Janati*, *Ariyah*. The more successful of these companies have established branches in different parts of Freetown. In 1953 there were about 30 such *compins* in existence, each usually with a membership of between 70 and 90. Branches also exist upcountry in Mende-land, but mainly in the towns of Temne country.

The members of such a society are required to pay into it a small sum every week. In one of the Freetown *compins*, this amount goes into a general fund to cover corporate expenses of the society's activities—rent of the yard in which they meet, provision of lamps, replacement of drum skins, etc. When any member is bereaved, a collection is held to which all must contribute. The association pays out the full amount collected on the death of a member and, in other cases, a fixed sum after it has satisfied itself that the matter has been properly reported. The procedure is for the bereaved person to notify the company's Reporter with a fee. This is passed on to the company's Doctor, who investigates the circumstances of the death; the company fines any member who has not notified them of a relative's illness so that they can see the sick person receives attention. The Doctor washes the body and sends the Provoe (Provost) around to the other members, telling them to gather that evening and bring their contributions. When anyone avoids payment without a good cause, the Bailiff may seize an item of his property of equal value. The evening's meeting is organized by the Manager, who brings the company's lamps. Members are under an obligation to take part in a wake, which lasts until the early hours. At the wake the bereaved person provides cigarettes, kola nuts, bread, and coffee and employs a singer. Many members of the association accompany the bereaved to the cemetery the next day and are provided with food on their return. The evening singing is repeated on the third, seventh, and fortieth days after burial, the attendance of company members on these occasions being voluntary (Banton 1957: 169-470).

Since the organization of these *compins* has already been described in detail by Banton (1957) it will suffice to stress a few characteristic features. As in many other voluntary associations of

the traditionally oriented kind, the dancing *compin* has a large number of officers. The names they bear reflect the influence of Islam, as well as of the British administration, upon the traditional heritage, e.g., the Sultan (the society's chief executive), the Commissioner, the Judge, the Doctor. One has the native title of *Pa Kumrabai* (also sometimes called the Director); he is a sort of patron who has nothing to do with the everyday affairs of the company but to whom is taken any dispute that the other officers cannot settle among themselves. Nearly all company officers have their "second" or deputy; often there is also an equivalent female officer, perhaps likewise with a "second." Thus there is a Second Sultan and a Second Mammy Queen, who is the deputy of the Sultan's female counterpart and has charge of the women's singing and dancing.

Most companies provide themselves with a shelter in the yard they rent, and sometimes there is a flagpole to which a flag is hoisted when a "play" is to be given. Alternatively, a drum may be beaten to announce the impending performance. Business meetings are generally held every Sunday afternoon, and a considerable effort may be made to rationalize procedure. The Sultan, the Judge, the Doctor, and perhaps the Clerk sit at a table, on the cloth-covered surface of which two objects are often prominently displayed, like regalia. These are a file cover containing a typed copy of the constitution⁶ and a clock to which the Sultan ostentatiously refers when a member arrives particularly late. Some of these business meetings are also the occasion for the collection and public disbursing of money.

It is also the committee's function to maintain the good name of the association and to enforce discipline among its members. All associations of this kind take precautions against the possible seduction of female members, because otherwise husbands would not allow their wives to attend and some fathers would forbid their daughters to take part. Unless a company has a good reputation in this respect it may be unable to obtain sufficient female members to carry on its activities. Appropriate measures, therefore, are often embodied in the constitution to the effect that members found guilty of adultery will be heavily fined and, if unable to pay, will be expelled, along with the woman concerned, from the society. Indeed, the constitution of one *compin* goes as far as to rule that "no member shall fall in love with any female member of the society." Fines are also levied for failure to attend meetings, unpunctuality, and other minor offences. Most companies assist a member financially if he gets into trouble with the police and is fined for a misdemeanor, such as fighting in the streets. There is a limit, however, to the number of times they will help him in this way, and if he is convicted of a felony he is expelled.

CONCLUSION

Mention has already been made of the role of voluntary associations in providing an urban substitute for functions customarily performed by the kin group. In other words, the migrant's partici-

pation in some organization such as a dancing *compin* or a mutual benefit society of the kind described above not only replaces much of what he has lost by removing from his native village, but offers him companionship and the opportunity of sharing joys and sorrows with others in the same position as himself. Particularly significant in this regard is the provision of funeral benefit because it enables the migrant to continue one of his most important kinship obligations.

In addition to supplying mutual aid and protection, these associations can also be seen as a means whereby rural people are adjusted to the more impersonal conditions and commercial practices of town life. The association facilitates this process by introducing the migrant to various economically useful habits, such as thrift, and it aids his social reorientation by accustoming him to mixing and working with individuals outside his own lineage or tribe. It also sets him new standards of dress, etiquette, and personal hygiene, and it teaches him the urban discipline of punctuality and routine.

Finally, the fact that the membership of these voluntary associations consists mainly of women and of younger men is indicative of the kind of change going on in the wider West African society. Women and the younger men in general possess a new status in the urban economy, and this is reflected in their increased ability to initiate group activities as well as to fend for themselves independently of the tribal elders.

NOTES

1. Acquah (1953: 51) also points out that this practice provides an avenue whereby women can acquire money without asking husbands for it. If a woman trades with her husband's money she is required to give an account to him of her takings, and he wants his share. If she acquires the money in any other way she does not have to do so, and this makes her independent.
2. Banton (1947: 188n) reports that in some parts of Sierra Leone the first recipients receive less and the last ones more, to compensate them for taking the risk and the inconvenience of waiting.
3. *Egbe* is the general term in Yoruba for a company of individuals.
4. Somewhat comparable groups of semi-professional entertainers, who perform traditional music on a commercial basis, exist as voluntary associations in Brazzaville. These societies consist of young men who have formed themselves into an orchestra under the leadership of an older man, whose compound they use for staging an evening's "social" on Saturdays and Sundays. The public is charged admission on these occasions, and the "band," under some such title as *Etoile*, *Jeunesse*, or *Record de la Gaîté*, also undertakes outside engagements. The receipts are divided among the members according to their position in the society, and anything left over goes toward the purchase of new instruments and the provision of further conviviality (Balandier 1955: 143-144).
5. The following is an excerpt from a praise song recorded by Banton (1957: 174):
Alhaji Sisay has done well for us, God bless him!
Ah, good friendship is a (precious) thing.
Alhaji Sisay of the Temne tribe, when no one knew the Temne would progress,
Alhaji Sisay did well for us, God bless him!
6. Compare the large and obviously new leather briefcase placed ostentatiously on a chair beside the officiating preacher in an American Negro "shouting" church.

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NOTES

Reinterpretations of Christian and Indigenous Belief in a Nigerian Nativist Church¹

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INTRODUCTION

THE Anang are located in Ikot Ekpene and Abak Counties of Calabar Province and comprise the second largest of the six Ibibio-speaking groups of southeastern Nigeria. Numbering approximately 375,000 persons, they possess no centralized political organization but are divided into twenty-eight village groups (*iman*), inappropriately termed "clans" by the British. While the *iman* is the broadest political entity, the village (*obio*) is the most important one, and within the *obio* the patrilineage (*ekpuk*) is the largest kinship unit, containing both nuclear and extended families. The village group is distinguished by the territory it occupies, as well as by dialectical and other distinctive cultural traits and a consciousness of unity expressed by its members.

Although within fifty miles of the Gulf of Guinea, where trade with Europeans and Americans had been carried on for over four hundred years, the Anang were insulated from direct contact with the White man by coastal peoples who acted as middlemen in the lively trade in slaves and palm oil (Dike 1956:37-41). The Anang were first contacted by the British in 1902, when one of the columns of the military expedition sent to subdue the Aro (Burns 1955:209-210) penetrated what is now Ikot Ekpene County. Two years later the British set up an administrative district in the area with jurisdiction over most of the Anang and neighboring Ibibio and Enyong peoples. Despite early pacification of these groups, intensive acculturation did not commence until the establishment of the first trading post and Christian mission in the region at Ikot Ekpene village a decade and a half later. Between that time and 1952, eight Christian denominations were installed among the Anang: the Wesleyan Methodist in 1919, the interdenominational Kwa Ibo the following year, the Roman Catholic Holy Ghost Order in 1925, the Missouri Synod Lutheran in 1936, the nativist African Apostolic the same year, the nativist Christ Army in 1940, the Assemblies of God in 1946, and the Seventh Day Adventist in 1948. The largest and most active bodies are the Roman Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, and Christ Army, and more than half of the Anang now profess one of the new faiths. It is the Christ Army denomination of Ikot Ekpene County that was studied in 1952, as part of a larger study of religious acculturation (Messenger 1957), and is the central concern of this paper.

The Anang have reacted to religious acculturation differentially according to sex and age groups (Messenger 1959a:286-299). Women as a whole have embraced Christianity, whereas only young men and boys among the males

have done so. Old men are either antagonistic or indifferent toward the encroachment of the alien religion and attempt to preserve indigenous beliefs and practices insofar as possible. Middle-aged men, on the other hand, have been much more susceptible to conversion, but among those declaring themselves Christian few are orthodox, for they tend to reinterpret Anang and Christian forms of worship while retaining many traditional beliefs. The two nativist denominations gain their support primarily from men in this age category and from women. Young people tend to join missionary churches, mainly because only these have the financial backing to provide well-equipped and well-staffed schools, hospitals, and other service facilities. Missionaries denigrate the nativist bodies for their pseudo-Christian dogmas; thus belonging to either nativist church means "losing face" in the estimation of westernized Anang youth.

THE INDIGENOUS RELIGION

Unlike most Africans, the Anang are monotheistic. They worship a sky deity (*abassi*), who is assisted in his task of governing the universe and mankind by over thirty spirits (*nnem*) residing on earth in shrines, and by souls of the dead awaiting reincarnation in the underworld. Most shrines (*idem*) are diminutive replicas of the Anang hut, but individual trees, groves, rocks, and ant hills serve to house spirits, and it is before these *idem* that prayers and sacrifices are offered to the deity to be carried skyward by the *nnem* residing within. Although *abassi* is thought to be both omniscient and omnipresent, either directly or through the earth spirit, he lacks ultimate omnipotence, for ghosts, witches, and the spirit of evil magic possess powers over which he sometimes exerts no control. The Anang do not know where these malignant forces originate, and they must be combatted with preventive magic.

It is believed that human beings possess two souls: one (*ekpo ikot*) inhabits a rock, tree, or animal in the bush and lives only as long as the person to whom it belongs, while the other (*ekpo*) resides in the body and is immortal. The latter is the seat of human behavior and personality, and upon the death of its bearer either transmigrates to the village of souls (*obio ekpo*) beneath the earth or becomes a ghost (*ekpo nyonyi*). While awaiting reincarnation, the souls of ancestors can give aid to their relatives above and are worshipped at shrines to which they return—when given permission to do so by *abassi*—to receive supplications. Once reincarnation occurs, the behavior of the individual from conception to death and beyond is predicated upon fate (*emana*) as assigned by the deity. However, fate may be modified within narrow limits through the exercise of free will by the person. Each act of free will is evaluated according to a divinely enunciated moral code, and the *emana* of the individual altered as a reward or punishment. Rewards range from granting an individual many offspring or material wealth to preventing his finger from being cut, while punishments range from transforming his immortal soul into a ghost at death to causing him to lose an object of little value. The Anang stress acts that are punished rather than those that are rewarded, and the severity of

chastisement depends upon the nature of the misdeed committed and the predilections of the deity. The belief that abassi will punish free-will behavior contrary to the tenets of his moral code is the most powerful mechanism of social control in Anang society.

Fate can be altered not only by the arbitrary assaults of malevolent supernatural beings and by the exercise of free will, but also by learning what the future portends. The Anang consult diviners (*abia idion*) when they desire knowledge of events to come, and thus they can avoid the harm and compound the benefits in store for them. The diviners of each iman are organized into a powerful secret society (*idion*), and to gain membership a man or woman must be chosen by the deity through violent headaches and must undergo a long, elaborate, and expensive initiation ceremony. The skilled specialist employs many techniques of prognostication, some learned during his initiation and others invented by himself or purchased from successful colleagues, and his insights are gained from abassi through the intercession of the spirit of divination (*idion*). Successful foretelling of the future demands appropriate rapport with this *nnem* and ritualistic perfection on the part of the *abia idion*, coupled with antecedent moral behavior on the part of both diviner and client.

Workers of magic (*abia ibok*) of each village group also form a secret society (*ibok*) whose membership requirements parallel those of the divining group, except that women are excluded. A specialist usually offers one of three kinds of professional services—prescribing medicines, administering ordeals, or controlling rain—and his abilities, like those of the diviner, depend upon the successful manipulation of a spirit (*ibok*) who possesses power emanating from the deity. Good and evil magic are seldom practiced by the same worker of magic, since members of *ibok* are restricted to performing services beneficial to mankind. If one is discovered practicing sorcery (*abia idion ibok*), he is expelled and is subject to severe social censure. Evil magic is widely practiced, however, both by self-trained practitioners and by former members of *ibok* who have renounced their orthodoxy to practice for lucrative fees.

The most dreaded of religious specialists is the oath giver (*mbiam*), who controls a spirit (*mbiam*) that will ruthlessly destroy those who have sworn oaths falsely, protect property against theft, and ward off ghosts, witches, and the sorcery *nnem*. Oath givers are not organized into a secret society as are diviners and workers of magic, the profession being passed on from father to oldest son. Often young men refuse to become *mbiam* because it requires the mastery of countless techniques and rituals, and the oath giver who makes even a minor mistake can be killed by the spirit he handles. One swearing an oath usually drinks a potion into which the spirit has been called by the practitioner, and should he be lying, he will perish within a stated interval. The oath swearer may direct the *nnem* to protect a plot of land or a compound from theft, and a symbol erected on such property warns the potential thief that the feared *mbiam* is present. Prior to 1947, specialists were assigned to the Native Courts, as they had been before to the traditional ones, to administer

oaths to litigants and witnesses making conflicting claims. The justices periodically swore before the mbiam that they would not accept bribes or express favoritism, and these oaths curbed such activities and made for a stable judicial system (Messenger 1959b:67-68).

THE CHRIST ARMY CHURCH

The denominations that were established among the Anang during the first decade of proselyting gained few converts, primarily as a result of the resistance of indigenous political and religious leaders. But commencing in 1930, a religious movement whose focus was the miraculous healing power of the Christian Holy Spirit swept southeastern Nigeria (Meek 1937:86) and led many thousands of Ibo and Ibibio-speaking people to join missionary churches, or at least to incorporate certain Christian elements into their traditional religions. This "spiritualist" movement also provided the stimulus for the founding of the nativist denominations now active in Ikot Ekpene County.

The Christ Army Church has been extremely successful in converting middle-aged men and women by advocating "spiritualism," by reinterpreting Christian and Anang doctrines and rituals, and by supporting indigenous customs, both religious and nonreligious, that the missionaries have sought to suppress in their own congregations. In Ikot Ekpene County, the denomination claims a membership of seventeen thousand persons, or approximately one-ninth of the total Christian population.

Christ Army ecclesiastical organization parallels the political hierarchy in Calabar Province. The churches, or prayer houses (*ufok akam*), in each county form a nearly autonomous unit headed by a single minister (*akwa abassi*), while a bishop (*akamba oku abassi*) who resides in Bonny is recognized as the titular head of the denomination in the province. The latter appoints ministers and lesser church officials, receiving a stipend once each year at Christmas from the ministers for his support and for the conduct of church affairs at the highest level.

In Ikot Ekpene County the denomination has thirty-two prayer houses, as well as a small training institution where future ministers, catechists, evangelists, and teachers are given rudimentary indoctrination in the basic tenets and procedures of the church. The members of each congregation contribute weekly offerings and pay for healing and divining services. Neither schools nor hospitals are maintained by Christ Army, and hence this income provides ample support for the limited activities of the church.

The minister presides over the main prayer house in Ikot Ekpene village and pays frequent visits to the other *ufok akam* in the county, or appoints assistants to do so. Assigned to every prayer house is a catechist (*isuy utum*) who conducts weekly services on Sunday and small prayer meetings daily, several evangelists (*mbio nkukul*) who are proficient at inducing possession, and a teacher (*andikpɛp*) who instructs the communicants in reading and interpreting the Bible. Most church officials are men, but many of the evangelists

are women. One of the major reasons why women have been attracted to Christianity, especially to the nativist bodies, is that they are allowed greater participation, both as clergy and as laity, than they are in Anang religion, where men control and acquire the greatest benefits from religious pursuits. Catechists and evangelists are called into their professions by the deity, who makes his choice known through effecting recurring headaches in those selected, just as abassi appoints diviners and workers of magic. Those so designated, before being officially accepted by the bishop and undergoing indocination, must also exhibit certain spiritual capacities, such as successfully foretelling the future or healing the sick.

In addition to conducting services, the catechist functions as a diviner. He prognosticates by becoming possessed by the Holy Spirit (*edisana odudu*) and speaking in a jargon purported to be the voice of the Christian deity (*ata abassi*) transferred to his mouth by the possessing medium; when once again in control of his faculties, he is able to recall what he has uttered and translate it into Ibibio, and this message reveals some aspect of the future. Often *edisana odudu* directs him to name a book, chapter, and verse in the Bible (*nnwed abassi*), and once the state of possession is terminated he reads the verse in which future events are indicated, if properly interpreted. Communicants pay for personal divining services during the daily prayer meetings, but on Sundays the catechist makes general predictions to the entire congregation. The latter most often allude to impending catastrophic events, usually associated with acculturation, or to the second coming of Christ.

Faith healing is performed by the evangelist, who also obtains his power from *ata abassi* through the Holy Spirit. The evangelist places his hands on the head of the kneeling church member, whereupon both become possessed. While in this condition, *edisana odudu* is believed to enter first the body of the clergyman and then that of the communicant. Possession as practiced by Christ Army followers is a controlled phenomenon, being limited to shaking the arms and shoulders while staring skyward, and resembles that of the indigenous diviner when he shakes palm kernels, a celt, or a wand to prognosticate at the command of the divining *nnem*. The Anang recognize another type of possession in which the one so affected rolls on the ground, races through the village, climbs palm trees and huts, and may become destructive of life or property. This variety is limited to members of the ancestor society who don masks that represent ghosts, and these supernatural beings guide the actions of the mask wearers. Violent possession is not practiced by members of this denomination, as far as could be determined.

Healing huts (*ufak udono*) are located behind the prayer house, and ailing members of the church can rent them to remain near the beneficent power of the Holy Spirit. These are single room dwellings with cooking and sleeping facilities, and individuals have been known to reside in them for periods up to a year and a half. Women who believe themselves to be sterile often cohabit with a catechist or an evangelist in a healing hut in the hope that they will conceive through the intercession of *edisana odudu*. The impregnation of the

Virgin Mary is alluded to by women defending this behavior in the face of missionary criticism.

REINTERPRETATIONS OF CHRISTIAN AND ANANG BELIEF

The Christ Army clergy maintain that their denomination has Biblical sanction, as have other Christian churches, and several quotations from both Old and New Testaments provide the foundation for Christ Army doctrine and practices. The following are the excerpts and the books, chapters, and verses of the Bible from which they are derived:

It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams; and your young men shall see visions (Joel 2:28-32).

And signs like these will attend those who believe; with my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in foreign tongues; they will take snakes in their hands, and if they drink poison it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will get well (Mark 16:17-18).

It will come about in the last days, God says, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all mankind; your sons and your daughters will become prophets, your young men will have visions; and your old men will have dreams (Acts 2:17).

These quotations from Joel, Mark, and Acts, as interpreted by church theologians, validate the prognosticating function of the catechist, especially the technique of interpreting "foreign tongues," and support the custom of having both male and female clergy. Faith healing by the evangelist is substantiated in excerpts from Matthew and Luke:

Then he called his twelve disciples to him, and gave them power over the foul spirits so that they could drive them out, and so that they could heal any disease or illness. . . . Jesus sent these twelve out, after giving them these directions: . . . Cure the sick, raise the dead, heal lepers, drive out demons (Matthew 10:1-8).

Then he called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to cure the sick (Luke 9:1-6).

By far the most important of these doctrinal cornerstones is the quotation from I Corinthians, for in this the whole of the church hierarchy and its functions are validated.

Activities vary, but God who produces them all in us all is the same. One man receives through the Spirit the power to speak wisely, another, by the same Spirit, receives the power to express knowledge, another receives faith, another, the ability to cure the sick, another, the working of wonders, another, inspiration in preaching, another, the power of distinguishing the true Spirit from false ones, another, various ecstatic utterances, and another, the ability to explain them (I Corinthians 12:4-11).

Thus the bishop has the "power to speak wisely"; the catechist is given "inspiration in preaching," the ability to proclaim "ecstatic utterances" and "explain them," and the faculty of "distinguishing the true Spirit from false ones"; the evangelist has the "ability to cure the sick" and possesses power for the "working of wonders"; the teacher has the talent to "express knowledge" of the Bible and Christ Army dogma; and finally, the communicant, by maintaining belief in this dogma, "receives faith" and ultimate salvation. But even

more important, this excerpt clearly delineates the role of the Holy "Spirit" as manipulator of divine power.

In Christ Army theology, the indigenous abassi is syncretized with Satan (known by that name), and God is believed to rule the universe and mankind from his abode in Heaven (*onyia isia*). The deity is of gigantic physical proportions possessing Negroid traits, and he lives alone in a compound deep in the sky from which he occasionally emerges to roam about the earth. These attributes also characterize the deity in the traditional religion, so represent reinterpretations. abassi was once a favored angel (called nnem, as are Anang spirits), but he called upon humans to build shrines and worship him rather than ata abassi and was expelled from Heaven as a result. He now resides in Hell (*idick ilie*), which is syncretized with the village of souls beneath the earth, where he commands ghosts, witches, and the Anang spirits. These malignant entities are thought to obtain their powers directly from Satan and to act upon his orders alone; they cannot attack human beings indiscriminately as indigenous belief insists. If he so desires, the Anang deity can order witches and ghosts to punish those who have disobeyed his moral strictures, but the Christian God is unable to do so, according to Christ Army dogma. These beings are commanded by Satan to tempt mankind to sin and to attack those whom Satan has singled out for punishment—usually persons who have prospered and led exemplary moral lives. Traditional belief maintains that the "good" man suffers evil because he is being punished for a misdeed in a previous incarnation, or is attacked by a ghost, witch, or spirit of evil magic acting independently. This state of affairs is attributed to the malevolence of Satan by Christ Army followers.

Ancestor worship is firmly supported in the nativist theology. Heaven is conceived as a village contiguous to God's compound where live souls are awaiting reincarnation. Recognition of a "bush" soul and an immortal soul persists, the former perishing when its bearer dies and the latter either transmigrating to obio ekpo or becoming a ghost. What happens to the immortal soul after death largely depends upon the nature of the person's behavior while alive, for although fate is still regarded as determining the course of human life, the area within which free will operates has been greatly magnified. Christ Army members are not nearly so passive in their acceptance of misfortune as are traditionalists; instead of bowing to emana, the former make every attempt to alleviate misfortune by practicing good works, by employing preventive magic to ward off Satan's cohorts, or by seeking the forgiveness of God.

Life in the village of souls is thought to be identical with life above in Anang theology, rewards and punishments being meted out by the deity on earth rather than in the underworld. But the Christ Army conception of Heaven reveals the influence of Christianity, for this abode of immortal souls contains everything that is treasured and sought after in the world below. Purgatory has no place in nativist doctrine, but the soul of one who in his previous incarnation has not committed evil enough to be assigned to ghosthood will be forced by ata abassi to reincarnate after only a single generation

in Heaven rather than after seven, which is the usual duration of a soul's stay. Thus an intermediate stage between Heaven and Hell is in reality recognized.

Few converted Anang of any denomination comprehend the nature of the Trinity (known by that name). The Christ Army clergy hold that long ago God instructed his son Jesus (known by that name) and the Holy Spirit to go out into the world, the former to bring Christianity to mankind, and the latter to heal the sick and injured, to foretell future events, and to grant God's forgiveness for sins committed by Christians. *edisaṇa odudu* is believed to be the most potent of the spiritual beings aiding the deity, and it is not an exaggeration to say that worship of the Holy Spirit dominates the theology of this denomination, even though *ata abassi* is known to possess ultimate power. No spirit in Anang religion occupies a like position of prominence. Angels aid the deity in his job of governing the universe, performing the numerous services Anang *nṇem* are believed to perform; however, particular angels are not syncretized with particular spirits, as is the case in other West African and New World Negro societies (Herskovits 1949:553-558). The function of rendering God omniscient and omnipresent has been transferred from the indigenous earth spirit to the Holy Spirit in Christ Army theology.

The members of this church are forbidden to build shrines and worship either Christian or Anang supernatural entities before them. Some do in fact, however, for belief in the efficacy of certain Anang *nṇem*—especially the female fertility and war spirits—persists, and many claim that *edisaṇa odudu* will enter traditional shrines. Some of the younger Anang diviners and workers of magic have taken advantage of this latter claim by building special *idēm* to house the Holy Spirit, where the power of the Christian deity is called upon to supplement the power of *abassi* in providing services for Christ Army communicants who may consult them.

The altar of the prayer house is considered a shrine (and called *idēm*) housing the Holy Spirit, and sacrifices to God of goats, chickens, yams, and palm wine are made before it in traditional manner. On Christian holidays, *ata abassi* is believed to visit the altar directly to receive prayers and sacrifices and to bestow benefits on worthy members of the congregation. The catechist of one of the smaller outlying prayer houses stated his belief that the souls of important ancestors might also enter the altar, but only if given permission by God to do so and called upon by the catechist upon receipt of a large stipend from the relatives of the deceased.

There is evidence that the practice of evil magic is increasing among the Anang. The primary cause of this condition is that the Native Courts have become notoriously corrupt, especially since *mbiam* specialists were banned in 1947 and swearing on the Bible substituted; litigants failing to receive redress there are seeking personal revenge through sorcery. It is also maintained that witchcraft is increasing since the recent incursion of the region by an Efik "witch society." The Christ Army clergy attribute the increase of sorcery and witchcraft to Satan mustering his forces for a titanic struggle with God in the near future, which will see Satan and his forces of evil destroyed,

followed by the Day of Judgment. The dead will then be raised and transported to Heaven, and there Christ Army believers will sit on the right hand of ata abassi and receive benefits superior to those received by members of other denominations. "Pagans" will live in Heaven also, but their lives will be little different from what they were upon earth.

With the growing fear of witches and the spirit of evil magic, much of the divining and healing performed by catechists and evangelists involves warding off or exorcising these beings. Some of the clergy serve as abia ibok and prescribe charms believed to contain power instilled in them by the Holy Spirit. Many of these charms are identical with those created by indigenous specialists, manufactured from materials collected in a sacred forest near the prayer house, just as traditional charms are made from objects obtained by the worker of magic from his own sacred forest. Other charms are procured from mail order houses in Europe and America which deal in magical and occult devices; the imported ones are considered especially effective because manufactured and used by people in Christian nations. Many are purported to be aphrodisiacs and are popular among older men who are concerned with waning potency, while others are regarded as love potions or blood purifiers. One variety, popular with young people attending school, is believed to heighten the ability to memorize and reason logically. A number of Christ Army communicants admitted purchasing charms from catechists to perpetrate evil magic, but this was stoutly denied by the Ikot Ekpene minister. Those who made the claim admitted that the catechists in question instructed them to employ the charms only against "pagans." Recalling the quotations from Mark—"with my name they will drive out demons"—and from Matthew—"and gave them power over the foul spirits so that they could drive them out"—it is easy to understand why the clergy regard their practice of magic as a legitimate enterprise.

Christianity has indirectly fostered the spread of immoral behavior among the Anang (Messenger 1959c:100-02). Many infractions of indigenous and western morality are committed on a broad scale, especially by youths in their frantic pursuit of wealth and prestige. Roman Catholicism, by producing the sacrament of confession, and Protestantism, by preaching a gospel of salvation through faith alone, have created the widespread belief among the people that the deity forgives all Christian sinners. Many wear crosses (known by that name) because they believe that this will ensure God's forgiveness for immoral deeds, as well as protect them from being harmed by evil spiritual forces. They also believe that edisana odudu is able to obtain forgiveness from the deity, and they direct prayers and sacrifices to the Holy Spirit. An important reason for the success of the Christ Army Church is the emphasis its doctrine places on the Holy Spirit as a dispenser of forgiveness. The clergy instruct communicants that ata abassi will forgive all sins so long as belief in Christ as Savior is maintained, and these sins are confessed to the catechist in a ceremony closely resembling that of the Roman Catholic Church.

The concept of a forgiving deity is foreign to indigenous dogma, wherein

abassi is conceived as one who is largely unforgiving and will punish all misdemeanors, even during a later incarnation of the sinner. Earlier it was pointed out that belief in a divine moral code and the ability of the deity to punish any deviation from its tenets is the most potent social control device in Anang society. The acceptance of this new concept has greatly reduced the efficacy of negative supernatural sanctions and has actually encouraged immorality, however unintentionally. It proved impossible to determine whether the behavior of Christ Army youth is less moral than that of others who claim to be Christian.

All of the nonreligious customs of the Anang considered objectionable by missionaries and colonial officials are supported by the Christ Army Church. Teachers excel at quoting obscure passages in the Old Testament of the Bible that can be interpreted in such manner as to support the practices of polygyny, bride-wealth, fattening prospective brides, killing twins and ostracizing their mothers, warfare, pledging and pawning property, and sacrificing animals before shrines and at funerals. Many Anang have transferred their religious affiliation from missionary bodies to the Christ Army denomination because of the latter's toleration of polygny. The rich esthetic content of Christ Army services, which includes elaborate and colorful rituals, music played by brass bands, and group singing of hymns using traditional rhythms accompanied by hand clapping, is an additional factor making for the success of the church in its proselyting efforts.

CONCLUSION

Many of the reinterpretations cited above, as well as a myriad of additional ones, characterize the belief systems of members of other denominations, both nativist and missionary. Lutheran statistics indicate that although fifty percent of the Anang and nearby Ibibio have been converted to Christianity, only an estimated ten percent at most are "true believers" (Nau 1945:161). The author believes the latter percentage is considerably exaggerated, and that traditional retentions and reinterpretations are to various degrees universal among Christianized Anang. In fact, several Anang and Ibibio pursuing university education in the United States, partly supported by mission funds, admitted to the author that they have had contact with ghosts and witches, both here and in Nigeria. Of the missionary denominations in Ikot Ekpene County, the Roman Catholic is by far the most sensitive and responsive to this condition, and some of its clergy are willing to accommodate Catholic ritual and dogma, at least in some measure, to the deeply rooted indigenous religious beliefs of the people.

NOTE

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NOTES

Traditional Authority and Social Action in Former British West Africa

St. Clair Drake*

A multi-dimensional revolution is sweeping the continent of Africa in this, the second half of the twentieth century. Economic, social, and political changes are occurring at a pace which evokes the politicians' metaphors such as "a raging hurricane," or prophetic book titles such as *Africa: Continent of the Future*. The social and economic factors underlying this process of change were isolated and analyzed by a number of sociologists and anthropologists prior to the outbreak of the series of political explosions which have occurred during the past ten years¹—"Positive Action" in the Gold Coast; Mau Mau in Kenya; Defiance Campaigns in South Africa; riot and rebellion in the Congo. Few social scientists, however, realized the extent to which a political revolution was maturing, or foresaw the extent to which new social formations—African political parties, cliques of radical intellectuals, and pressure groups based upon sentiment and interest—would crystallize out of the social process and become catalysts of change as well as independent factors in a complicated process of social disorganization and reorganization.

Once the great nationalist upsurge had occurred, however, it became grist for the mill of the political scientists, some of whom have addressed themselves to the problem with skill and insight.² Comparative analyses and case studies of political action in Africa have begun to appear, and the groundwork is being laid for a sociology of African politics. In the meanwhile, descriptive studies of various aspects of the political process may provide raw material for analysis as well as problems which can be refined for more thorough research and analysis. This is the *raison d'être* for this brief study which involves a small portion of West Africa.

The Shift in Power in West Africa

All of the former British and French colonies and trust territories in West Africa are now sovereign states or have entered upon the final stages of transition toward independence. The process began in 1952, when Kwame Nkrumah

became the first African Prime Minister of the Gold Coast. After five years of quasi-independence, the Gold Coast became fully independent in 1957, and was renamed Ghana. Independence then followed rapidly for Guinea, Senegal, Soudan, and Togoland. Now Nigeria, with its thirty-five million inhabitants, will become independent in 1960, Sierra Leone following in 1961, while the tiny colony of Gambia is making constitutional changes and discussing its future. The Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Niger, and the Upper Volta are currently negotiating with France for an independent status. All of the leaders of West African states are talking of "closer union," and Ghana's prime minister is stressing the desirability of merging the West African territories into a single state.

The entire West African area is poised for "a leap into The Twentieth Century." In each territory, plans are being made and implemented for the expansion of educational and health facilities, for the improvement of agriculture, and for eventual industrialization. There is recognition everywhere, too, of the fact that the new governments will have to meet the rising level of popular expectations if they are to survive after the high emotional pitch of the "anti-imperialist struggle" and the unifying force of "a common enemy" have diminished. The term "socialism" has become a popular verbal symbol of the promised welfare state.

In each territory, power has shifted from the hands of a governor and his civil-servant bureaucracy into the hands of an African prime minister and his cabinet of ministers representing a mass political party which elects both the executive and the legislators. Since party machines depend upon the support of a mass of illiterate voters, a skillful use of personal, visual, and verbal symbols is necessary to organize consent and to legitimize the new rulers and the conciliar institutions. Most leaders consider "strong government" a necessity for attaining development goals.

The new elite has inherited a skein of knotty problems from the colonial regimes. Not the least important of these problems is that of how to secure effective collective action on the part of a bewildering diversity of ethnic groups at varied levels of economic development and social complexity, and with differential degrees of exposure to, and acceptance of, Western values. No colonial regime ever tried to solve this problem through the instrumentality of representative government. The new elite, however, is trying to do so. The presence of a "traditional order" presents problems as well as opportunities.

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1. See, e.g., B. Malinowski, *Dynamics of Culture Change*; Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*; G. Balandier, *Sociologie Actuelle d'Afrique Noire*; and the publications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, particularly the works of Max Gluckman and Clyde Mitchell.

2. Note David Apter, *The Gold Coast in Transition* and James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* as examples.

The Structure of Traditional Authority

In each of these states, Western-type executive, judicial, and legislative institutions exist side by side with "traditional" institutions—familial, religious, economic, and political.³ A process of adjustment and fusion of these two types of political and social institutions is evident everywhere, a process which began in the days of colonial rule and which still remains. This process is inexorable and irreversible.

While local and regional variations exist throughout West Africa, it is possible to construct an ideal-type formulation of the major characteristics of "traditional authority" as it existed prior to colonial contact:

- 1) The controls of kinship groups were basic. Within kinship groups (family, extended family, or clan), although lineage or clan leaders had extensive executive and judicial authority, there was a wide measure of discussion and consultation by adults of both sexes when crucial decisions were involved. *Legislation was not a primary issue. The rules of life were largely set by custom.* Discussion centered around the expediency of concrete actions within the framework of customary rules; rules were reinforced by sacred sanctions.
- 2) At the village or town level, even though "chiefs" or other wielders of authority and power might come from designated families or clans, the commoners often had some say about the selection of individuals, or where they did not, they frequently had the power to oust them. Where this power was not directly given to the populace, it was often vested in representatives of kin or "ward" groups, elders, or other types of councils. Decisions—executive, judicial, and legislative—when taken by chiefs were normally decisions by "chiefs-in-council," not their lone dictatorial decisions. Chiefs had ritual power as well as political power.
- 3) In the more complexly organized societies, covering wider geographical areas, there were "tiers" of political power. Sometimes a paramount chief existed as a ritual and political head, over subordinate groups of chiefs who formed his council, and these, in turn, were the representatives of groups of villages and clans whose interests they were inclined to protect, and which they sometimes represented as delegates.
- 4) Among some West African peoples, corporate groups existed which served as checks upon the abuse of power by chiefs. Cases in point would be the *asafo* groups or *mmerante* among the Akan peoples; or some of the so-called "secret societies" in various places, one of the best known of which was the Poro Society among some of the Sierra Leonian and Liberian tribes. Where the political power of cults and societies was not direct, such institutions always influenced political decision-making indirectly.

3. Succinct surveys of traditional institutions in English-speaking West Africa may be found in the Ethnographic Survey Series of the International African Institute, edited by Daryll Forde. Surveys are available for the peoples of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone.

Autocrats occasionally subverted this primitive democracy, and there were, of course, undemocratic elements in traditional African societies. Nearly all West African societies were characterized by a heavy male bias even when they were matrilineal, and many of them placed limitations upon the rights of "strangers" or had depressed strata as an integral part of their structure. The prevailing *ethos* put the accent upon *age* as a primary attribute of power holders, and, therefore, limited the full utilization of intellectual talent or the verve of youth.

The prevalence of animistic beliefs and of a mystical attitude toward nature inhibited social innovation as well as technical inventions, while the widespread belief in witchcraft (*juju*) introduced an element of tension into group life that is not present in interpersonal relations in those cultures where the source of evil is located in a devil who exists outside the boundaries of the social group, or where one's destiny is attributed to Providence, Fate, the planets, or "accident."

Finally, no elements were present in these societies leading toward self-generated change in the direction of individualism and equalitarianism, as was the case in the capitalistic and rationalistic societies of Europe and America. African societies had to wait for the introduction of such elements from without. Traditional authority operated to buttress all of these conservative tendencies, for the merging of ritual and secular power (whether it resided in lineage elders or in chiefs and kings) stabilized the society by inhibiting social change.

However, there are some observers and leaders who feel that, at the rural local level, the still viable *communal ethos* of African cultures brings powerful reinforcement to the carrying out of contemporary development plans, and that the existence of extended family obligations obviates the necessity for devising elaborate social security systems. They would strive to retain these features, which are sometimes referred to as aspects of "African Socialism."

The old pattern of mandated authority and of frequent consultations between leaders and the led is also frequently cited as a feature worth preserving; but the new imperatives of budget making or the provision of sanitary services and village planning, require a degree of speed and efficiency of administration with which prolonged deliberation and a system of "going back" for consultation before taking action is inconsistent. Few defenders of African traditional societies would contend that they can cope with the totality of demands imposed by the goals of democratization and modernization.

Traditional Authority and Colonial Rule

Colonial rule in West Africa began less than two hundred years ago despite over five hundred years of trade relations with Europe and America, and of contact with missionaries among coastal peoples. Native rulers, even along the coast, preserved their hegemony throughout most of this period and a process of state-building, similar to that which occurred in post-neolithic Mesopotamia, began throughout the whole area bounded on the north and east by the Niger River. A pattern of "traditional authority" had become stabilized in this entire area by 1840, involving three "tiers" of political structure:

- a) A few "royal families" and their retainers exercising sovereignty over relatively large areas which included the

ancestral homeland of the specific ethnic group from which the ruler came and the territory of tributary ethnic groups (e.g., the Asantehene in Ashanti-land or the King of Dahomey, ruler of the Fon people);

- b) A larger number of "kings" of city states and their immediate hinterlands (e.g., the Obas of the Western Region of Nigeria);
- c) "Paramount Chiefs" over smaller ethnic or regional areas often owing allegiance to rulers of types (a) and (b).
- d) Thousands of local chiefs at the village level;
- e) Chiefs and headmen exercising authority over enclaves of "strangers" residing within towns or villages.

The pattern of "indirect rule" in British areas made full use of this structure as an agency of administration.

The technique of colonial rule was essentially the same throughout the area, namely to install a small but highly efficient army and police force to "keep the peace"; to find allies among traditional rulers (chiefs, emirs, and "kings") wherever possible, and to allow them to function very much as before but with the moral, financial, and military backing of the European power.⁴ Where it was not possible to enlist the aid of the traditional rulers, it was the policy to replace them with other African leaders who were cooperative (warrant chiefs or appointed chiefs). In each territory, a civil service bureaucracy was established, with Europeans in the top control spots, but with Africans trained to serve in the minor posts. In every case, too, a great deal of ritual and pageantry created and maintained the *mystique* of the Governor and his immediate circle in order to impress and overawe the African population with the power of the metropole.

Traditional rulers were rather generally relieved from the checks imposed upon them in traditional society. Efficiency of administration in the interests of organizing local populations for such ends as supplying labour for European homes, mines, and plantations; for the recruiting of soldiers, the collecting of taxes, and for suppressing certain aspects of local cultures which outraged the moral sentiments of those back home; the suppression of violent conflict between ethnic groups—these were the ends for which *restriction* rather than *expansion* of indigenous representative government was often deemed necessary. A loyal chief was considered more dependable than a recalcitrant council or a reluctant constituency. Money, power, prestige, and patronage could often secure the loyalty of a chief or elicit a commercial concession from him, and these new relationships freed chiefs from the nuisance of popular restraints.

Yet, in coastal urban areas throughout British West Africa, the advisory Legislative Council, with members nominated from among cooperative traditional leaders and "safe" educated Africans, became, under pressure from the Africans, an institutionalized increment which formed the basis for eventual evolution into fully elected legislative assemblies.

Throughout West Africa, traditional authority has survived the impact of colonial rule. "Chiefs," the traditional rulers in West Africa, continue to settle cases of disputes according to customary law and to control the allocation of land in their role of custodians of the people's patrimony. They also have religious duties to perform; they have sacred as well as secular roles. Their right to tax and to dispose of tax monies was jealously guarded in the days of colonial rule and is still conceded. Their position, quite understandably, still gives them great prestige in the eyes of the illiterate people who are the bulk of their subjects.

Traditional Authority and the New Elite

The accession to power of the educated African elite has meant a threat to the status of, and to some extent to the power and privileges of, the traditional rulers who, in a sense, were "protected" by the colonial governments. They would not have been human had they not all been apprehensive over their fate, and had not many of them taken positive steps to protect their position. The extent to which, even today, traditional rulers resist pressure from the new elite may be illustrated by an extreme case, that of the small British colony of Gambia.⁵ In this territory, with a population of only three hundred thousand people, there were, in 1958, thirty-five paramount chiefs in the hinterland protectorate. Of these, only five were literate. The town of Bathurst and the immediate environs constitute "The Colony" and it possesses a small elected legislature and a pattern of party politics. It is customary for the protectorate chiefs to hold an annual conference, and when they did so in 1958, they invited the Bathurst politicians to come and meet with them to discuss constitutional changes which were impending.

Three of the four Bathurst parties had proposed a Legislative Council for the Gambia of twenty-seven seats. They had made the concession of suggesting that twenty seats be allotted to the Protectorate, all of them to be filled by election with universal suffrage. They wished to have a cabinet of nine ministers chosen by the victorious party. The chiefs made counter-proposals, asking that eight of the twenty seats be reserved for persons nominated by the chiefs' conference rather than thrown open for election. They also insisted that women not be allowed to vote in elections to fill the other twelve seats. The chiefs also wanted no party politics in their areas and wished to have the nine ministers chosen on a *regional* basis.

The chiefs were scornful of all the city politicians' compromise proposals, causing one exasperated urban political leader to say,

Although universal adult suffrage is desirable for the Protectorate, we don't want to force it down the chiefs' throats. But if we find this is the only way of getting them to accept political parties in the Protectorate, we would have to insist.

The last speaker for the chiefs' side said,

4. E.g., Kofi A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*, Chapters VI and VII on "British Rule and the Chief."

5. "Chiefs in Gambia Politics: I," *West Africa* (October 18, 1958), 987 and "Chiefs in Gambia Politics: II," *West Africa* (October 25, 1958), 1017; and *West Africa* (March 15, 1958), 251.

We won't be forced into anything we don't like and no one can force us.

Some Gambia chiefs have, upon occasion, said that they would prefer to remain under colonial rule rather than to accept leadership from the new elite.

The problem of accommodating the structure of traditional authority to the new conciliar structure is one to tax the ingenuity and mature judgment of every West African statesman. Two years ago, the editors of the publication, *West Africa*, published a leading article, "Chiefs in Transition," in which, after discussing the position of chieftaincy in a number of West African countries, it was stated that,

... the diversity of West Africa is in no way better shown than in the differing functions of chiefs in the different countries today. One test of the skill and maturity of West African politicians is their success in finding a place for chiefs in the new West Africa. There is no single answer and the different positions in which chiefs now find themselves in different territories is due as much to the basic differences in the institution itself as to the degree of radicalism with which the politicians approved of it.⁶

The fate of traditional authority will be finally settled primarily in terms of the extent to which traditional rulers can be rendered innocuous as a power threat to the new governments or can be turned into a positive asset; and to the extent to which traditional authority and political practices can be fitted into a situation which demands the quick release of productive energies, and efficient, expeditious decision-making on economic and political questions. Since traditional rulers do, in fact, often have considerable prestige and do wield power, the initiative is, by no means, entirely with the new elite. Adjustments and compromises must be made which are not entirely satisfactory to either side, but the ingenuity of the compromises, the diversity of the systems of accommodation, and the new patterns of stabilization are indeed impressive. The Western Region of Nigeria has been studied as a case in which redefinition of the role of chiefs has proceeded most smoothly. Ghana, on the other hand, presents a case where redefinition has been more difficult. Due to limitations of space only the Ghana case can be discussed in this article.

The Resolution of the Chieftaincy Conflict in Ghana

Ghana, with a population of between six and seven millions, is a new nation, formed by the knitting together of four discrete regions which had formerly been administered by Britain as "The Gold Coast."⁷ The coastal southern area was called "The Colony." Here, the dominant tribes were the Fantes and Akwapims, among whom chieftaincy was highly developed and cherished; and the Gas, among whom the

institution was somewhat less influential. The British colonial government organized the paramount chiefs of this area into an advisory and consultative body known as the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs (JPC). By 1958, a year after independence, the JPC had fifty-nine members. In the center of the Gold Coast, an ethnically homogeneous area—Ashanti—preserved proud memories of the days when its people formed a powerful military machine and offered stubborn resistance to British conquest. Over the Ashantis, a "Paramount of Paramounts," the Asantehene, exercised great influence in his role as custodian of the Golden Stool, which was believed to embody the soul of the Ashanti Nation. Fourteen Asantehenes had occupied the stool since 1700 when it "descended from the heavens." In 1958, the Asanteman Council, presided over by the Asantehene, was made up of forty-nine paramount chiefs, each of whom had under him a group of sub-chiefs distributed throughout his territory, at the village level.⁸ In the far north, was an area, The Northern Territories, which was not only the most underdeveloped area, but which had been isolated from the rest of the country during most of the colonial era. Here, village chiefs gave allegiance to one or the other of several paramounts (each bearing the title, Na). These chiefs had never had a unifying institutional structure binding them together as in Ashanti and The Colony. The fourth region was the former British trust territory of Togoland, where chiefs existed among the Mamprusi, Dagomba, and the Ewes, but which also did not have a highly organized council of chiefs.

The problem of nation-building in Ghana involves the development of a national consciousness to replace ethnic and regional consciousness, as well as the adjustment of the institution of chieftaincy to the new Africanized civil service and the machines of political parties. It also involves, as one political leader phrased it, "showing them where power lies." The present pattern of relationships between traditional authority and the new elite represents a balance of forces arrived at after a decade of struggle.⁹

When the Convention Peoples Party came to power in 1951, in the transitional period prior to independence, most of the traditional rulers preferred to support the more conservative United Gold Coast Convention rather than the radical populist C.P.P. The C.P.P. embarked upon a two-pronged programme of dealing with traditional authority at the local level: 1) encouraging the younger, more radical elements, and all of those with grievances against the then incumbents, to find legitimate means for "destooling" chiefs who were not "progressive"; and 2) embedding democratically elected Local Councils in the heart of every local community. There was such a wave of destoolings that even the C.P.P. eventually attempted to slow down the process. At the beginning, Local Councils were set up with

6. *West Africa* (November 29, 1958), 1129-1130.

7. Dennis Austin gives a clear succinct account of constitutional development in Ghana up to 1957 in an article, "Institutional History of the Gold Coast/Ghana," in *What are the Problems of Parliamentary Government in West Africa?* The Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government, 1958.

8. An indispensable work for understanding traditional authority in Ashanti is Dr. Kofi A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in Modern Ashanti*, Oxford University Press, 1951. See also Robert Lystad, *Ashanti; A Proud People*.

9. David Apter's *The Gold Coast in Transition* is the only scholarly, well-documented study available on these problems, although its primary focus is upon other aspects of the movement toward independence.

two-thirds of the members being elected and one-third being appointed by the traditional authorities. It was also usual for the chief to preside over meetings. Local councils had the power to collect taxes for local improvements of their own choice.¹⁰

Local councils have had their difficulties but still remain an integral part of the new Ghana. By 1959, however, a series of Acts had removed chiefs from the councils. The extension of magistrates' courts was also narrowing the area in which chiefs could exercise judicial authority. They were being urged to "support the government of the day" but to confine their activities to the carrying out of ritual functions related to the religious life of the people and to functioning in a quasi-judicial capacity by settling disputes involving breaches of customary law. They were also to serve as spokesmen of the needs of their people. They were to be "The Fathers of the People." Because most of rural Ghana is illiterate and folk, and because traditional religion is still viable, the prestige of chieftaincy as an institution remains high, and a "good chief" still commands loyalty, affection, and respect.

Most chiefs, quite naturally, resented the gradual encroachment upon their area of power and influence, and their resentment reached its climax on the eve of independence between 1954 and 1956, when it was given expression through a National Liberation Movement which arose in opposition to the C.P.P.¹¹ This movement, centered in Ashanti, demanded the organization of a federal state rather than a unitary state. It proposed that each region should control its own finances, and should have its own civil service, as well as a bicameral legislature, the senior body of which would be a House of Chiefs. The N.L.M. also asked for a bicameral national legislature with a House of Chiefs in addition to the Legislative Assembly. The C.P.P., which had a legislative majority, refused to accept these demands. The issue was joined.

The struggle was fought out in a pre-independence national election, as well as on the streets in the villages and towns of Ashanti between "action squads" representing both sides. The C.P.P. won the elections, but traditional authority would not concede.

A series of conferences was held to define a desirable constitutional structure, but the N.L.M. boycotted these. Finally, a British constitutional adviser suggested that a unitary state was best for a small country like Ghana, but that in each region there should be an elected Regional Assembly and a House of Chiefs. He advised against a House of Chiefs at the center, however, and against the devolution of too much legislative and financial power to the regions. It took a visit from the Colonial Secretary himself to win the assent of the N.L.M. to this constitution with which Ghana began its independent existence.

In the two years since independence, the government of Ghana has revised the constitution so as to eliminate the elected Regional Assemblies. It has given a guarantee, however, that the Houses of Chiefs will remain. It has then proceeded to reorganize the structure of relations among paramount chiefs. Ashanti has been split into two regions, each with its own House of Chiefs, thus reducing the Asante-man Council to twenty-seven members. The Joint Provincial Council has been replaced by an Eastern House of Chiefs with fifteen paramounts as members; and a Western Region House of Chiefs with twenty-six members. A Volta Region House of Chiefs, with thirty-seven members, has been formed in what was once British Togoland and a small section of the eastern Gold Coast. A Northern House of Chiefs with twenty-four members was also organized. Thus, between 100 and 150 paramount chiefs have been grouped into six collegial bodies reflecting regional and ethnic interests and sentiments. The number of important posts open to chiefs within their own organizations has been increased. These houses of chiefs lack any effective legislative power, but they do have substantial budgets at their disposal which may be used both for local regional development and for enhancing the prestige of the institution of chieftaincy. The whole formal structure of chieftaincy at all levels is now under the supervision of Regional Commissioners and District Commissioners, political officers who represent the central government.

The victory over those who supported greater power for chiefs through a federal structure was accomplished by a series of astute political maneuvers on the part of the government.¹² The magnitude of the victory is best illustrated by noting the present position of the Asantehene, whose linguist (spokesman) founded the National Liberation Movement and whose chiefs had sworn the Great Oath of Ashanti to support the N.L.M. and to oppose the C.P.P. The Asantehene has not only repudiated his supporters of the N.L.M., but has expressed his determination to support "the government of the day." His relations with the Prime Minister are now warm and cordial.¹³ His sub-chiefs are, one-by-one, falling in line for once the holder of the Golden Stool had shown his willingness to accept a new role vis-à-vis the new African elite, the backbone of chiefly opposition was broken. On the

10. See Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana* and George Padmore, *The Gold Coast Revolution* for background on the early phases of C.P.P. government. Padmore discusses the village-level struggle in some detail.

11. See St. Clair Drake, "Prospects for Democracy in the Gold Coast," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1956) for a discussion of the growth of the NLM and an analysis of its early activities, as well as a summary of the constitutional conferences which followed. The issue of chieftaincy was only one of several issues which gave rise to the NLM.

12. First, there was a strong show of police power to restore order. This was followed by a judicial investigation of the affairs of the Asantehene which uncovered certain irregularities in the use of palace funds, including the diversion of some money to support the NLM. The Asantehene was then persuaded to repudiate those who had "misled" him. In the meanwhile, his power to dispose of stool land revenues was curtailed. The large Ashanti Region was then split, a separate region being formed among paramount chiefs who had historical reasons for antagonism toward the wide powers of the Asantehene. Throughout all of these events, the Asantehene was given a chance to preserve his dignity and his stool.

13. On the occasion of the Independence Day celebrations in 1959, the Asantehene was permitted by his elders to break custom and to fly in an airplane to Accra. He was greeted with courtesy and deference by the prime minister. While in the capital city, he presented a trophy to a winning football team, crowned a beauty queen, attended state dances, and was photographed dancing the high life with Miss Ghana. He visited a number of development projects before returning home. The Asantehene is a man in his sixties, of limited formal education, but with wide experience. He has been knighted and likes golf; but he also takes seriously his role as mediator between Ashanti ancestral spirits and the living. He wears his evening clothes with as much dignity as he does his kente cloth.

other hand, another famous chief, the paramount of Akim Abuakwa, refused to support "the government of the day" even when his area had shifted its electoral majority to the C.P.P. He was eventually destooled, arrested for refusing to hand over stool property to his successor, and banished from his state to the capital city of Accra. With the pattern of these two great chiefs before them, other chiefs could chart their courses. Some have resisted governmental enticements and pressures. Others have calculated the costs and the rewards, and made either quiet or ostentatious readjustments. One of the Northern Chiefs, who was an Opposition member of Parliament, crossed the floor in 1960, embarrassing everyone with his announcement that his chiefs-in-council had advised him to join the C.P.P.¹⁴ Notes such as the following appear frequently in the Ghana press:

DONYINAHENE JOINS C.P.P. — One hundred years old Nana Yaw Nimo, Donyinahene (Ashanti) has resigned from the United Party and joined the dynamic CPP. . . . The Donyinahene stated, *inter alia*, "I am declaring with my soul and heart that I and my people wholeheartedly support Dr. Nkrumah and his party. . . . We have been deluded well and long enough. Now our eyes are open. . . . I do not think that the fatherly heart of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah will refuse to accept us even though we might have been late."¹⁵

BEREKUM STATE SUPPORTS GOVERNMENT POLICY—One of the notable resolutions passed in recent times was the one passed by the Berekum State Council at an emergency meeting held on the 14th of April, 1960. . . . "in view of the fact that we have full confidence in the Government of Ghana headed by Osagyefo President Kwame Nkrumah we support the Government in all matters that are deemed suitable for Ghana."¹⁶

Over eighty percent of the people in Ghana are illiterate. Personal symbols and relationships phrased in terms of kinship carry great meaning to the illiterate masses. Terms of praise which sound extravagant to Western ears are a normal day-by-day aspect of relations between chiefs and their followers, an integral part of courteous ceremonial. Loyal chiefs receive such praise from the politicians. Politicians, in turn, receive it from the chiefs and their people. To a certain extent, the Prime Minister is viewed by the illiterate masses as a "Paramount of Paramounts" and the new evolving structure tends to institutionalize some of these appraisals of the new role of Chief of State.

Chieftaincy in Ghana is not a feudal institution. Land is held in trust by the chief for his constituents in some cases and there are some stool lands administered by chiefly families.

But most land is owned by family and lineage groups. Occupational prestige and wealth are not the basic criteria in the selection of chiefs. Quite humble men and women may be enstooled as Chiefs and Queen Mothers. Most chiefs are people who have shown leadership abilities, who know customary usages, but are illiterate.

There are significant exceptions, however.¹⁷ The Ghana government has attempted to open up opportunities for literate chiefs to play a more active role in non-traditional sectors of government. One well-educated chief is ambassador to India. Another has served as a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly. Another, who holds a doctorate in anthropology from Oxford, is Cultural Adviser to the Ministry of External Affairs. Others serve on important boards and commissions. There is nothing to prevent a chief from running for the Legislative Assembly if he has the requisite qualifications, but only two, both from the North, have been elected to the Assembly.

Chiefs in Ghana have been encouraged to retain the dignified ceremonial and colourful attire which surrounds the institution. Chiefs, moving in state with their linguists and stool bearers, under multi-coloured umbrellas, and with their corps of drummers, are familiar figures on all types of ceremonial occasions ranging from dances at the State House to the dedication of church organs, from the opening of new factories to the proroguing of Parliament. They still hold the colourful durbars which were once "laid on" for visiting

17. No comprehensive study is available of the social characteristics of chiefs in Ghana. The following table lists all of the chiefs whose names appeared in *Ghana Yearbook*, 1958 (which contains a short *Who's Who* in Ghana). These are the more progressive and better educated chiefs, or the ones of national political importance. It will be noted that, as a group, they are not highly educated, although the younger men are better educated. The important thing about all chiefs is that they are not a class set apart from the rest of the population and that, upon their death, their children or their nephews do not necessarily inherit their status.

Age	Ed.	Occupation	Honours	Age	Ed.	Occupation	Honours
85	—	not given	—	50	P	lorry driver	—
82	—	produce buyer	—	—	—	and owner	—
72	P	business man	—	50	P	road overseer	—
68	—	—	—	48	P	clerk	—
68	P	storekeeper	KBE	44	T	teacher	—
61	P	civil servant	QMC	44	P	—	—
60	S	cocoa broker	—	42	P	clerk	—
60	S	engine driver	—	41	P	driver-mechanic	—
59	P	policeman	CM	36	C	teacher-clerk	—
58	—	trader-farmer	—	35	B	shorthand typist	—
58	P	civil servant	KMC	33	P	tax collector-	—
			OBE			typist	—
			KB	33	—	—	—
55	P	—	—	30	C	—	—
51	P	clerk	KMC	29	PG	teacher	—

14. The situation was embarrassing because, technically, a member of Parliament represents a *geographical* constituency and a political party, and he would not be expected to take orders from a council-of-elders. His honest admission of the forces which impelled him to change his political colours brought temporarily into the open a situation which is of considerable interest to political scientists, namely, the extent to which traditional factors affect election procedures and the activities of parliamentarians, in a country such as Ghana.

15. *Evening News*, June 7, 1960.

16. *Ibid.*, April 29, 1960.

Education	Honours
P—Primary school	KBE—Knight Bachelor of the Empire
S—Some secondary school	QMC—Queen's Medal for Chiefs
T—Teacher training school	CM—Coronation Medal
C—Some college work	KMC—King's Medal for Chiefs
PG—Post-graduate work	OBE—Order of the British Empire
B—Business school training	KB—Knight Bachelor

A dash indicates that no data were given. The assumption is that if no schools were mentioned, the chief probably had no formal education. Hobbies mentioned by chiefs ranged from poultry farming to stamp collecting; from hunting to reading; from gardening to golf.

queens, kings, and governors, but which now honor the African Prime Minister and other governmental dignitaries. As "Fathers of the People" they are urged to play an active part in mobilizing the people for economic and social development. When they do, they are praised and honoured. When they do not do so, they may be denounced as "unprogressive," or, in extreme cases, their destoolment is arranged.

Traditional Authority and Community Development

Since 1948, Ghana has evolved a Department of Social Welfare and Community Development which has made available to towns and villages an experienced corps of Community Development Officers trained to carry out programmes at the village level. Through the years, community development has included such diverse projects as a concerted attack on illiteracy through mass education; organization of the Roof Loans Scheme which encourages the replacement of thatch roofs with metal roofs; the organizing of home economics training for women, and of young farmers clubs; assisting in the building of roads, schools, post offices, maternity centres, etc. The department also has carried out educational campaigns for various ministries making use of all varieties of visual aids. The wide range of projects is due partly to the fact that the programme emphasizes the voluntary selection of projects by villagers themselves, the basic philosophy of the programme being that:

... the initiative should come from among the people themselves [and that] there must be a process of stimulation by the community development organization to break down apathy and to show people that what they want can be provided if they are prepared to listen to new ideas and to help themselves.

Self-help, in the form of voluntary labour and substantial financial contribution, has been at the heart of the programme.¹⁸

Enlisting the cooperation of local traditional authorities takes very high priority in community development projects for, in hundreds of situations, they have the power to "make or break" a programme once it is under way, or to prevent ideas of self-help programmes from emerging within their areas at all. One Community Development Officer, writing upon the order of his procedures in mounting an illiteracy campaign, begins his field report as follows:

- (a) Cinema van arrived in a town or village to spend two days.
- (b) Mass Education workers talked to the chief, elders and literate leaders about the establishment of literacy classes.

"Talked to the chief and his elders" would be the first item in most development officers' notebooks as they give an account of the "softening up" process. Of one very difficult project, the Director of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development wrote:

In 1947 the Department was brought in to carry out a land resettlement scheme among the Frafra, who occupy a very crowded area in the North. In this case pure logic should long ago have driven them elsewhere to earn a living from the land. It was the attachment to the soil and the powerful vested interests of chiefs and fetish priests which prevented this. The first step was, therefore, to achieve, if not the support, at least the tolerance, of the chiefs and fetish priests towards any move. Conducted visits, photos and films of success in the new area were arranged and a start was made in a small way with eight families—more than had been persuaded to move in the last three years. Eighty families have now been resettled and there is a waiting list.¹⁹

As a community-development or mass-education project proceeds, securing the active participation of a chief, as well as his blessing, becomes very desirable. It is perhaps a rare situation in which it can be reported, as in one case of road building, that:

Encouragement has been given by the Paramount Chief of the area who sometimes personally drove the tractor.

But, throughout Ghana, it has become the pattern for the chief to associate himself with the projects through participating in money-raising activities, "gracing the platform" when literacy certificates are being handed out, or making a ceremonial inspection tour. In construction projects at the village level, the cooperation of the chief is essential in securing a full and regular turnout of "communal labour."²⁰ The chief's role in community development will vary, of course, with the personality of the individual. Sometimes he initiates an activity, more often, perhaps, he simply climbs upon the bandwagon which the more literate or energetic of his subjects have set a-rolling. But there is general agreement that a chief's support, whether in the form of quiet approval or active participation, is essential to the successful outcome of most projects.

Within the last year Local Development Committees and Regional Development Committees have been particularly active, for Ghana is just beginning a new long-term development plan. While this programme will utilize the self-help

18. For a detailed account of the history, philosophy and organization of the programme, see Peter du Sautoy, *Community Development in Ghana*, Oxford University Press, 1958.

19. du Sautoy, *op. cit.*, p. 151. A similar situation arose in the attempt to persuade a group of villagers at Tema to move about a mile away from their traditional fishing site to a new fishing harbour and village. A new city was being built in what is to be Ghana's major sea-port and the village site was needed for a central business district. In this case, education was not enough. It was necessary to use the threat of the bulldozer and to exploit dynastic feuds and other internal divisions until a "cooperative" segment of the traditional structure would support the resettlement plans. The traditional rulers were helped in saving face by governmental co-operation in a large and impressive quasi-religious ceremony just before the move.

20. Communal labour for community projects is a general custom in West African societies. The colonial powers used such labour in the early days of colonization for carrying out public works. Undoubtedly, considerable pressure was sometimes used by chiefs to secure a labour turn-out. Today, compulsion is frowned upon, and a chief must rely mainly upon his prestige and persuasive powers. Insofar as there are C.P.P. "party activists" in a village his efforts are reinforced. Notes like the following occur frequently: "Work on the construction of a £1,700 Post Office Building at Mamfe is almost completed. . . . The cost of the project was met by the people themselves through voluntary contributions and with free labour and the Central Government gave a grant in aid." (*Evening News*, June 10, 1960)

activity of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, it is likely that much of the stimulus will now come from the new corps of District Commissioners who are scattered throughout the country. The C.P.P. press, during the past year, has given constant publicity to the activities of local development projects and these news notes reveal the role of chiefs in the process. One finds, for instance, an occasional news item such as this:

The newly appointed District Commissioner was officially presented to the chiefs and people of the Nanumba State on Tuesday. The District Commissioner appealed to the chiefs and people to co-operate with him in his duties. . . .²¹

Older chiefs do not always find it easy to adjust to the presence of what one elderly Northern chief called "The New White Men"—the African District Commissioners who represent the C.P.P. government and are sometimes quite young. But adjust they do, and notes such as the following are by no means rare:

An £800 meat house for Kete Krachi built with funds provided by the Buem-Krachi Local Council, supplemented by communal labour, has been opened by the District Commissioner. At the ceremony was Nana Kofi Deduagya II. . . .²²

Sometimes the ceremony at the conclusion of a project celebrates a long period of cooperation between chief and District Commissioner or chief and the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. District Commissioners may stimulate Town Development Committees to take action and can secure aid for them from the central government. For example, quotations in the press show how chiefs, with the aid of Town Development Committees, led their people in projects for construction of roads, for clean-up campaigns, or for constructing street drains with communal labour. As custodian of stool lands, some chiefs are also in a position to give concrete assistance to agricultural projects such as experimental poultry farming or other types of agricultural experiments. Many of the current activities of chiefs are purely ceremonial, in the sense of putting in an appearance to lend sanction to some activity, but more often they are drawn in as presiding officers for conferences. These conferences are variously organized by the Peoples Educational Association, the Ghana Women's League, the Junior Red Cross, the United Ghana Farmers Council, and other similar organizations. And, occasionally, there is a beauty queen to be crowned.

The contest for power between traditional authority and the new elite is virtually over in Ghana, and, in some cases, chiefs have become what an Opposition Party newspaper calls "C.P.P. chiefs," that is, those who, in addition to serving as "Fathers of the People," supporting "the government of the day" and aiding social development, also go a bit further, as in the following case:

The Nkrumah Eastern Progressive Association had been formed at Akwapim with Nana Atropa Amoa II, Ankoabeahene of Larteh Kubease, as President. Besides

being a charitable organization with an object of raising the economic standards in Akwapim, it also aims at propagating and explaining the Republican form of Government.²³

Opposition chiefs are developing a sense of national patriotism which rises above the local village, the region, or the tribe.

The 1960 Census as a Crucial Instance

That chieftaincy can respond to the challenge of a national effort was illustrated in the case of the 1960 census which was taken in March. Because of their close ties with the people, had chiefs been indifferent to this national effort, or hostile to it, a complete enumeration of Ghana's population could never have been carried out. In addition to the normal suspicion of rural, unsophisticated folk about an inquiry as to their ages, marital status, employment, etc., there were other factors in the situation which could have made census-taking in some areas extremely difficult. Insofar as some opponents of the Government party chose to define the census as "a C.P.P. party project" and this definition found acceptance, sabotage of the census could be considered one form of "loyal opposition." At crucial points, however, the top officials of the United Party spoke from a joint platform at mass rallies with C.P.P. speakers, appealing for cooperation. In some areas there was bitterness over deportations and Preventive Detention.²⁴ Here, too, refusal to cooperate might have been expected. It was impossible, also, to prevent the rise and spread of rumors—that the census was to count the people for compulsory military conscription; that the data would be used for deciding to shift people from one part of the country to another; that it was a part of a project to increase taxes; that it was a prelude to confiscation of property, etc., etc. These rumors had to be scotched as they arose and the meaning of the census explained in detail.

The evening of March 20, 1960, was officially proclaimed "Census Night" in Ghana. The Office of the Government Statistician, with a U.N. expert who had come to help set the census up, planned to attempt a complete enumeration of the Ghana population. School teachers, clerks, and other available literates took intensive training courses so that every house in Ghana could be visited within a fortnight after Census Night in order to secure a list of every person who had slept in the house on that night, along with certain basic information about each person.

In addition to other administrative committees, a Census Education Committee was organized to publicize and explain the census over a period of almost half a year. Special films were made and census cinema vans toured the countryside. Films were run in the theaters. Thousands of leaflets and posters were distributed. Special radio talks were made and mass meetings held. Elaborate preparations were made to fix the attention of the whole population upon a date—MARCH

23. *Evening News*, March 21, 1960.

24. At certain points in the political struggle, influential Muslim aliens, who were encouraging bloc voting against the C.P.P., were deported to the French areas and to Nigeria. Ghana law allows citizens accused of subversive activities to be detained for up to five years. Most detainees are charged with conspiracy to commit overt acts of violence.

21. *Evening News*, March 31, 1960.

22. *Ashanti Times*, June 4, 1960.

20—and to burn into the people's minds memories of where they spent that night and who stayed in each house on that night. "A Night to Remember" became the slogan.

From the outset, the Census Education Committee gave high priority to enlisting the cooperation of traditional rulers. In the initial stages of the work it became clear that their assistance was needed in helping to locate and map every dwelling within each enumeration unit. As planning proceeded, it became equally clear that their authority and prestige would be needed in most non-urban areas for securing confidence in the operation and for motivating people to tell the truth. Chiefs were asked to emphasize to the people that, in order to get schools and hospitals, it was necessary for the government to know how many people there were of both sexes and all ages, so that, like a good father, government could plan for the national household.

As census day drew near, an intensive educational campaign was launched. The regional Houses of Chiefs received deputations from the Census staff and were encouraged to give public collective endorsement to the census. Newspapers circulated widely the pictures of paramount chiefs meeting to endorse the census. The members of some Houses of Chiefs held meetings within their own states and these were also reported widely in the press. One paramount announced that anyone who did not get himself counted would be banished from his state and would be numbered among the living dead! The President of the Denkeyira State Council convened an emergency meeting of all chiefs in his state three days before the census to urge cooperation upon them. The week before, the Beposo State Council "adopted a resolution supporting education of the people on the forthcoming Census." In addition to these pronouncements, many paramount chiefs went on tours of their areas to explain the census and to call for cooperation. Newspaper accounts gave prominent display to these activities:

The Omanhene of Suma State addressed about 50 representatives of voluntary organizations to round off his fortnight's census education tour of his state.

The Omanhene of Shama State, Nana Kwaw Fraiku III, Vice President of the Western Region House of Chiefs, addressed census rallies. He explained the operations and asked for cooperation.

At Sunyani, several thousand people attended a census

rally in a public park presided over by the Sunyanihene, Nan Kwaku Ababio.

Nana Kojo Anyimah II, Krontihene Sefwi-Anliwiasco State and Nana Osei Bonsu of Bibiani have completed their tour of towns and villages in the State to educate the people on the census. They had earlier visited 13 villages.

Kwadjo Nyako II had completed a six-day census education tour of his area during which he addressed mass rallies and spoke to some of his sub-chiefs and individuals. He urged his people to take the census seriously and to help the census officers in their duties.

Throughout the country, too, in hundreds of villages, local chiefs acted as did the Omanhene of Mompata, who, in his efforts to make March 20 "A Night to Remember,"

... made arrangements for traditional drumming and dancing, a candle light procession and pealing of church bells.

The author has been told by census officials that the co-operation of chiefs was indispensable in carrying out an operation which they deemed to have been highly successful—the enumeration of the population.

Summary and Conclusion

Throughout West Africa the new African elite and the chiefs are in the process of adjusting their relations to each other. The tendency of the new states in British areas is not to abolish chieftaincy but to redefine the role of chiefs and to educate them where possible, and to force them where it is impossible, to accept the redefined status. In Ghana, a struggle for power ensued which was eventually won by the new elite. In all areas, chiefs are exchanging roles of power for those of prestige. The data presented suggest the fruitfulness of a carefully documented study of the process by which chiefs have become accommodated to their new status, isolating the factors which have made for ease of adjustment in some situations and difficulty in others, and assessing their relative importance in the process of planned economic and social development. A thorough analysis of the types of traditional sanctions which are still effective would contribute to our understanding of the process of social change.

NOTES

Anti-European violence in Africa: a comparative analysis¹

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One of the outstanding facts about the past fifteen years of nationalist turmoil in subsaharan Africa is the infrequency with which Africans have resorted to violence against their European rulers. There have been only two major disturbances of law and order directed against Europeans: the Mau Mau movement in Kenya, active from 1952 to 1957, and the Nyasaland revolt of March, 1959. In addition, as of April, 1959, there have been five less serious outbreaks of anti-European rioting: in the Belgian Congo, January, 1959; in South Africa and Nyasaland in 1953; in Nigeria in 1950; and in the Gold Coast in 1948. Considering the intensity of anticolonial feeling and the amount of nationalist activity, this is a phenomenal record of non-violence. It is particularly noteworthy in light of the fact that African tribal and regional groups have often engaged in violence against each other, both traditionally and in the past fifteen years. Since it has been common for Africans to inhibit their strong aggressive feelings against Europeans, it is all the more im-

portant to analyze the few cases of overt violence and attempt to differentiate them from situations in which violence has not erupted.

In an overview of subsaharan Africa since the end of World War II, the distribution of major outbreaks of anti-European violence is not self-evident on the basis of common-sense assumptions. There is no obvious correlation between colonial policies and outbreaks of violence which would explain why the latter have occurred in some territories and not in others. Several possible hypotheses come quickly to mind. The first is that, the greater the oppression of Africans, the more likely they are to react with violence to their European rulers. According to this notion, those Africans whose basic human strivings have been most frustrated will develop the most aggression against the European government or settler population, and this aggression will express itself in an outburst of rioting or revolutionary activity. Such a hypothesis is implicit in the oft-repeated journalistic predictions of a bloodbath in the Union of South Africa. A second hypothesis, contradictory to the first, is that anti-European outbreaks are most likely in those territories where Africans are treated in the most liberal manner. According to this line of thought, wherever living standards have been raised, literacy introduced, and the social mobiliza-

¹ An earlier draft of this paper was presented in a symposium on Africa at the Midwest Conference of Political Scientists, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, on May 1, 1959. I am indebted to the staff of the International Relations Program, Northwestern University, for helpful criticisms; but responsibility for the views presented here is mine alone.

tion of Africans increased the most, the "revolution of rising expectations" will create more anti-European hostility than it alleviates and result in eruptions of violence. Furthermore, it could be argued consistently with this hypothesis, governments which do most to improve the welfare of Africans are least likely to use severely repressive methods against their political activity and thereby encourage the Africans to take the risk of using force and violence to achieve their ends. A third hypothesis, based on an extrapolation from the Kenya, Algerian, and Nyasaland cases (ignoring negative cases), is that the presence of a politically powerful white-settler population leads to outbreaks of violence by the indigenous residents. The white settlers, according to this notion, have a stake in the subjugation of the African which goes beyond that of any contemporary colonial government and which, especially when the African becomes aware of the disparity of living standards between the European settler and himself, eventually arouses anti-European aggression.

None of these hypotheses is consistent with the data on the distribution of anti-European outbreaks among territories in subsaharan Africa over the last fifteen years, as will be evident in the presentation of factual material which follows. In attempting to understand the behavior of exotic peoples, I do not expect to reduce it to a set of rational principles, but I do assume that, like all human behavior, it is characterized by regularities which are not beyond the reach of scientific investigation. In the belief that it is desirable not only to find the order in a particular set of data but also to relate it to a general proposition, and in the absence of a general proposition about colonial affairs capable of explaining the events in question, I have turned to general behavior theory in psychology for a theoretical principle which might shed some

light on anti-European violence in Africa.

The theoretical principle chosen comes from conflict theory in psychology. It is one of several alternative hypotheses concerning the consequences of two competing response tendencies being elicited by the same stimulus complex. Brown has stated this hypothesis most succinctly as follows:

Two tendencies, in competing with each other, generate an emotional state or condition having certain of the functional properties of drives. In particular, responses elicited at the time of conflict or shortly thereafter, should be intensified by the dynamogenic properties of the conflict-produced drive . . . [2, pp. 139-40].

Whiting and Child (6) and Wright (7), in cross-cultural studies, found that conflict between aggressive tendencies and anxiety about aggression results in a *stronger* expression of certain types of aggression than is found where the conflicting anxiety is absent. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (5, p. 260), in a study of American child-rearing, found that the most aggressive children were those whose mothers both permitted them to be aggressive *and* punished them severely for it. These studies are not conclusive validation of the conflict-drive hypothesis, but they do indicate that confirmation of it has come from disparate types of behavioral evidence and that it has been found useful as an explanatory device in the study of aggression. It is particularly interesting to a student of anti-European aggression in Africa because it explains data which are anomalous from the viewpoint of a simple reward-and-punishment theory of response strength.

In applying the conflict-drive hypothesis to the problem of explaining the incidence of anti-European violence in Africa, I assume that in all colonial areas Africans harbor aggressive feelings against Europeans. These aggressive feelings stem from envy of the material advantages of Europeans,

the occasional arrogance of colonial officers, social discrimination, and a thousand other grievances both real and imagined. Two opposed types of colonial policies concerning African aggression may be distinguished: (a) a policy which favors self-government by Africans and offers them the ultimate object of their aggression (viz., the expulsion of the Europeans from their country) and (b) a policy which opposes African political autonomy and offers them severe punishments for attempting to gratify directly their aggressive impulses. These policies have differential effects on the expectations and overt responses of Africans. The first type of policy encourages them to entertain hopes of self-rule and to engage in nationalistic political activity; the second type encourages them to expect endless European domination and to accept that domination passively.

If a government consistently follows a policy of the first type, we may expect that Africans will express a good deal of their hostility to the government, that they will achieve gratification of their aggressive impulses in nationalist politics, and that eventually the Europeans will transfer political authority to the Africans and take their leave. If a government consistently follows a policy of the second type, the Africans will have to inhibit their aggressive responses toward the government, perhaps displacing them onto other objects, and will adopt a more or less resigned attitude toward their European rulers. Suppose, however, a government were to promulgate *both* policies, encouraging expectation of self-rule, on the one hand, and yet indicating in other ways that European domination will continue and that African nationalist activity will be punished. This might build up in the Africans two expectations and response tendencies of nearly equal strength: the expectation of self-rule and responses appro-

priate to it and the expectation of European rule and the responses appropriate to that. This clearly puts the African into a conflict situation, and, if the conflict-drive hypothesis holds, the result would be a sharp rise in aggressive-drive level. Thus the government whose policies reinforced conflicting response tendencies in the Africans under its control might be faced with more violence than governments which consistently maintained one type of policy or the other.

It is now possible to state in general form the application of the conflict-drive hypothesis to colonial situations in Africa. In proposing it, I am consciously ignoring institutional and cultural factors in order to see how far a simple behavioral principle can go in explaining complex events. The hypothesis is as follows: *The more the behavior of the European-run government arouses in the African population conflicting expectations regarding their political autonomy, the greater the probability of an outbreak of African violence directed at European lives and property.* It should be noted as a corollary that policy reversals, unless they are so sweeping as to grant a large measure of African autonomy or to suppress all African political activity, give rise to conflicting expectations in the short run and are therefore likely to stimulate anti-European violence even in territories where the policy is comparatively consistent in long-term perspective.

To summarize, the propositions stated generate the following expectations: (a) In a territory where the government has pursued a relatively consistent policy favoring African self-government, there will be little anti-European violence; (b) where the government has pursued a consistently repressive policy toward African self-rule, there will also be little anti-European violence; (c) where the government has pursued inconsistent policies toward African political

autonomy, there will be a good deal of anti-European violence; and (d) in territories whose governments fall into the first two categories, the small amount of anti-European violence occurring will follow policy reversals by the government or actions which the Africans perceive as policy reversals.

In considering the evidence relevant to these theoretical expectations, I shall start with the two major revolts in Kenya and Nyasaland, proceed to those territories where violence has been least, and then consider transitional situations leading to minor outbreaks.

British policy in Kenya preceding the Mau Mau outbreak of 1952 might be entitled a "half-century of ambivalence." The colonial office and its representatives in Kenya vacillated between a policy favoring the African and rewarding the initiative shown by leaders of the Kikuyu, the tribe which eventually gave rise to Mau Mau, and a policy favoring the political position of the white settlers who have outspokenly opposed African political autonomy. The manifestations of both official attitudes have been numerous. On the side of African autonomy, every African schoolboy knows that the initial British interest in East Africa was the liberation of the Africans from the depredations of Arab slave-traders and that the British government only reluctantly agreed to declare a protectorate over Uganda and Kenya. The clearest formulation of British policy concerning Kenya is contained in the Colonial Office White Paper of 1923, which states:

Primarily, Kenya is an African territory . . . the interests of the African native must be paramount, and . . . if and when those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail.

Acting on this statement, the Colonial Office has often paid attention to the demands

of educated Kikuyu leaders and sometimes granted them minor but significant concessions. In 1921 a spontaneously organized African organization was successful in winning the abolition of forced labor for women and children. Several royal commissions were appointed to investigate the land question in response to African complaints, and, after the Carter Land Commission of 1932, some minor land reforms were instituted. When an important Kikuyu leader went to London in 1929, he won for his people permission to establish independent schools. During the late 1940's and early 1950's, the government allowed African political activity to grow with the force of postwar discontent; the Kenya African Union was openly formed and held mass meetings, although it could not be said to operate freely. Thus the government, in line with its stated aim of putting African interests first, tended to be fairly permissive of, and occasionally responsive to, the political initiative of modern African leadership.

Simultaneously, however, another line of policy in Kenya was being developed. The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915 made Crown lands of all tribal areas and gave the governor the power of alienation. He used this power to the benefit of Europeans then settling and developing the country. In 1919 the small group of white settlers was given the right to elect eleven members of the Legislative Council. It was not until 1944, twenty-five years later, that the first African was appointed by the government to the Legislative Council, and only in 1957, after Mau Mau, that the Africans elected their own representatives to the Council. Throughout the years many Africans perceived the privileged political position of the white settlers as government indorsement of the settlers' outspoken white-supremacy ideology.

Thus in the background of Mau Mau

we find a history of government policies arousing and reinforcing in the Kikuyu conflicting expectations concerning the role of the African in Kenya political life. It is particularly noteworthy that, before it broke out into the open, Mau Mau appears to have been primarily an internecine movement within the Kikuyu tribe. Only after the arrest of the leaders of the Kenya African Union, a reversal of the government's permissive attitude toward African political activity, did Mau Mau erupt as anti-European violence. The conflict-produced aggression arising from decades of conflicting policies was probably augmented by conflict stimulated by the sudden policy reversal implicit in the arrests, and this may have touched off the open revolt.

The Nyasaland revolt of March, 1959, affected most parts of the country and apparently had strong popular support. In reviewing the policy background to it, the general situation in the Central African Federation is of great importance. The Federation was founded in 1953 with "racial partnership" as its policy slogan. Although the slogan appeared in many official pronouncements, there were, prior to the 1959 revolt, few signs of its being realized in government action. The Federation electoral system insured overwhelming white-settler control of the legislature, and severe social discrimination against Africans continued virtually unabated. Hence the "racial partnership" idea and actual government policy have been at variance. A related source of conflicting expectations for Africans in the Federation has been the tension between European moderates, who favor racial partnership, on the one hand, and the vocal proponents of white supremacy, who were able to remove the liberal Garfield Todd from the position of prime minister in Southern Rhodesia, on the other. This contradictory situation is most intense for the Africans in

Nyasaland, who prior to 1953, when they were part of a country containing very few Europeans, did not expect to be ruled by the whites of the Rhodesias. Entry into the Central African Federation was, in this sense, a policy reversal for Nyasaland, and it had its eventual outcome in the present revolt. Thus the recent history of Nyasaland contains one major policy reversal concerning African autonomy, followed by conflicting and equivocal policies under Federation.

By contrast with the violence of Kenya and Nyasaland, the Union of South Africa and the Portuguese territories of Mozambique and Angola have been notably quiescent. No major eruptions of anti-European violence have occurred in these territories, although Africans are more oppressed in them than anywhere else on the continent. Government policy has been consistently paternalistic, and African hopes for self-rule or even "racial partnership" have never been raised. Of Mozambique, where Africans are subjected to forced labor, strict pass laws, and drastic economic and educational discrimination, and are arbitrarily tortured at the whim of local administrators, Marvin Harris, a critic of the regime, says, "Violent acts against Europeans are practically unheard of. Yet there are only 476 white and 2351 native policemen, the latter being armed with nothing but truncheons" (4, p. 10). It is not necessary to detail the oppressive policies of the South African government; suffice it to say that, within a long-standing paternalistic framework, policy toward the Africans has increased in restrictiveness since the first Nationalist regime in 1948. This increase resulted in the 1953 riots discussed below, but the explosion of racial violence expected by many outside observers has never occurred.

The absence of major anti-European violence in South Africa and Portuguese terri-

tory indicates that the presence of white settlers alone does not stimulate Africans to direct aggression. The crucial point is whether the settlers represent a different policy toward Africans from that of the colonial government, as they do in Kenya and the Central African Federation, or a policy in agreement with that of the existing regime, as they do in South Africa and Angola. In the former situation settlers contribute to the conflicting expectations of Africans; in the latter situation they reinforce the consistent attitude of the government.

Nigeria, Ghana, the Sudan, and Uganda have also had very little anti-European violence during the past fifteen years, although the policies pursued by the British Colonial Office in those countries were diametrically opposed to the repressive policies of the Portuguese and South Africans. In these four British territories African self-rule was admitted as the aim of government policy, and movement toward this goal has been relatively consistent and steady. The Sudan and Ghana are independent; Nigeria will be independent on October 1, 1960; and independence for Uganda is probably not far off. As in the repressive territories, however, so in those moving unequivocally toward independence, conflicting expectations have not been aroused, except temporarily as described below, and anti-European violence has been rare and minor.

The French in western and equatorial Africa have had no anti-European violence, but without being as liberal as the British in Ghana or as repressive as the South Africans. Until 1956, however, their policy did have important consistencies: first and foremost the absolute denial of the possibility of African independence from France. Educated Africans might indulge in politics aimed at being elected to represent their people in Paris, but no expectations of self-rule were ever raised. Most African leaders

in these territories accepted this and did not aim at national independence. A second consistency was the highly centralized and even authoritarian French bureaucracy controlling the affairs of French Africa and allowing very little local autonomy. Repressive measures were used when deemed necessary. Another possible reason for less aggression among French Africans is that one of the usual sources of anti-European hostility, social discrimination against Africans, was so much less pronounced in French territory. In 1956 sweeping reforms changed the basic position regarding African self-rule, and in 1958 they were offered their independence if they wanted it. By moving so quickly from the strongly colonialist camp to the other end of the African political spectrum, the French were able to avert the violent consequences of a more limited policy reversal.

The dangers of limited change from a "hard" to a "soft" position regarding Africans are nowhere better illustrated than in the Belgian Congo. The postwar Belgian policy was famous for its benevolent but strict paternalism. Africans were trained for and admitted to jobs at varying levels of technical skill in the developing industrial system and given decent wages and social services. On the political front, however, all power in the Congo was exerted by transient bureaucrats representing the government in Brussels; neither whites nor blacks in the Congo were enfranchised or given any hope of eventual self-determination. Africans did not receive academic education at the higher levels and were not allowed to visit Europe or America. Religious movements with political overtones were crushed and the leaders imprisoned. Under this politically repressive system there was no anti-European violence. In the past five years, however, the official attitude has changed. In 1954 an interracial university was begun in

the Congo; educated Congolese have been allowed to travel abroad. Last year the Belgians announced an extremely limited scheme for elective self-government among the urban Africans. Elections were held, and African burgomeisters took office. A few months later, in January, 1959, anti-European riots raged in Léopoldville, Matadi, and smaller centers; one of the African burgomeisters was arrested as leader of the movement causing the riots.

The conflicting expectations producing violence can also follow a limited shift from a "soft" to a "hard" policy toward African autonomy. In South Africa the Nationalist electoral victory of 1948 began an era of increased repression which has not yet ended. Restrictive legislation gained momentum in the early 1950's, and in 1952 the major African political leaders were arrested. Shortly thereafter, in 1953, violence broke out in Port Elizabeth, East London, and Kimberley, and several Europeans were killed. The areas in which the outbreaks took place were those which had seen the *least* oppression of Africans in the Union. Since 1953, as the consistent pattern of Nationalist restrictiveness has accelerated, no further violent outbreaks occurred until July, 1959 (see below).

In Nyasaland, too, the 1953 shift from what might be considered a "soft" policy to a "hard" one under Federation produced immediate violence of considerable intensity. The conflicting expectations of the Africans, already suspicious of "racial partnership" with Rhodesian whites, were intensified by the fact that, although the British government was leading them into federation with the Rhodesias, the governor prohibited colonial officers from speaking on either side of the federation issue. The Africans interpreted this as government opposition to a government policy. In May, 1953, after the announcement of federation, a

month of anti-government riots and sabotage in the Southern Provinces of Nyasaland was ended with help from Southern Rhodesian and Tanganyika troops.

Even in those territories which have moved rapidly toward independence, government vacillation, inconsistency, and temporary policy reversal have stimulated occasional anti-European violence. For example, Apter writes the following of the government attitude toward manifestations of postwar discontent in the Gold Coast:

Activities such as strikes and aggressively worded demands for self-government were at one moment taken as examples of subversive activity, and treated accordingly, and other times taken as examples of the readiness of Africans to assume larger shares in politics. . . . The inconsistent responses on the part of officialdom served to aggravate political tension [1, p. 166].

In January, 1948, these tensions, further aggravated by the police shooting demonstrators in Accra, were expressed in a series of anti-European disturbances beginning in Accra and spreading to other parts of the Gold Coast.

The one outbreak against Europeans in Nigeria during the past fifteen years appears also to have been touched off by what the Africans perceived as governmental inconsistency. In 1948 a governor with a more liberal reputation took office and announced a series of sweeping reforms in policy concerning Africans. Coleman states, however, that "most of the 1948 reforms were mere declarations of future policy" (3, p. 317), and they remained so for several years. But they raised African expectations to a high level. Thus, when in 1949 ten extreme nationalist leaders were tried for sedition and twenty-one African mine workers were killed by police during a strike, the effects, particularly of the latter event, were brief but intense. Mob violence and looting di-

rected against Europeans were widespread, and an attempt was made to assassinate the chief secretary to the government (3, pp. 300-301).

This, then, is the over-all picture of African outbreaks directed against Europeans during the past fifteen years. Where a consistently repressive policy was followed, as in South Africa and Portuguese Africa, violence was minimal or non-existent. Where a policy consistently moving toward self-rule was followed, as in Ghana and Nigeria, anti-European violence was also minimal. Major outbreaks of violence have occurred only in Kenya and Nyasaland, where strikingly inconsistent policies have been promulgated by the government. Furthermore, minor outbreaks of violence have occurred in a number of territories regardless of their long-term policies, following policy reversals of limited scope. When the change has been from "hard" to "soft," as in the Belgian Congo, announcement of the new policy and its high ideal precedes by a long time concrete implementation on the local level, arousing conflicting expectations. When the change is from "soft" to "hard," the arrest of African political leaders or some other restrictive action usually follows a period of relatively permissive political atmosphere and is thus at odds with the reinforced expectations of the Africans. This evidence indicates that, in both the long run and short run, policies arousing conflicting expectations, in accord with the conflict-drive hypothesis, lead to anti-European violence, whereas relatively consistent policies do not. An unusual and noteworthy case is that of the French territories, where a dramatic and unparalleled switch from paternalism to self-rule appears to have been carried off quickly and consistently enough to avert the arousal of anti-European violence.

For the future, the conflict-drive hypoth-

esis would generate the following predictions (as of April, 1959): Of the territories where European rule still predominates, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Nigeria, and Uganda are those in which anti-European violence is least likely. The territories in which violent outbreaks are most likely to occur are Kenya, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and the Belgian Congo. Of these latter territories, only Northern Rhodesia has not had violence before, and there were incipient outbreaks during the recent Northern Rhodesian elections. In an indeterminate category are the Portuguese territories, where conflict among the Europeans appears to be weakening the repressive policy concerning the Africans, and Tanganyika, which has many of the qualities of the Kenya situation but where Africans may appeal to the United Nations.

It is possible to examine the foregoing predictions in the light of subsequent events. One bit of confirming evidence comes from the Belgian Congo, where on October 13, in Matadi (according to the *New York Times*, October 15, 1959, p. 14), members of the Ngouziste sect gathered in defiance of a curfew imposed because of a previous outbreak of "native mob violence" and stoned policemen, hurting the police chief, district administrator, and police commander, all Europeans. Martial law was declared. This appears significant, since the Belgian government, though announcing (in January) a new program of developing the Congo into a fully independent African state, has shown recent signs of slowing down the pace of such developments. One hundred African strikers were arrested in Luluabourg in August, and on September 3 King Baudoin accepted the resignation of Maurice Van Hemelrijk, minister for the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, who has been popular with Africans and criticized by Belgians for giving in too fast to

Congo nationalists. This on-again, off-again pattern is the expected antecedent of the kind of violence that occurred.

In general, however, recent events in Africa have served to highlight obstacles to success in prognostication of the above kind. One is the difficulty of ascertaining in advance what actions the European governments will take. Unforeseen changes include those resulting from changes in policy-making personnel, such as the replacement of Sir Andrew Cohen by Sir Frederick Crawford as governor of Uganda, and administrative actions such as the decision to enforce the regulations against private beer-brewing in Durban, South Africa. The appointment of the new governor in Uganda in 1957 has been followed by a sequence of events leading to manifestly greater anti-government feeling on the part of the Africans, and violence seems possible at this writing. The enforcement of regulations against African brewers in Durban and new restrictions on movements into the city resulted in antigovernment riots in several parts of Natal Province in July, 1959. This is consistent with the previous finding that South African disturbances tend to occur in the provinces where the most liberal policies toward Africans had been pursued. Furthermore, the government action was a sudden change from a permissive to a restrictive policy. But the policy shift in Natal was not foreseen by the author in making differential predictions for African territories.

Another obstacle to successful prediction has been the inadequacy of information obtained on certain territories. For example, organized attacks on Europeans have occurred in the French Cameroons during the summer of 1959, but it is not entirely clear what the antecedents of this specific activity are. The violence appears to be a reaction to government suppression of the *Union des Populations Camerounaises*, the

only significant pro-Communist movement in subsaharan Africa, but published accounts have not been detailed enough to permit an assessment in terms of the hypothesis.

A final difficulty in predicting African events on the basis of the conflict-drive hypothesis is the current rise and spread of pan-Africanism. As African leaders from different territories meet more frequently and disseminate information concerning conditions in other parts of the continent among their people, the assumption that African expectations are derived primarily from the governmental policy in their own territory becomes increasingly untenable. Until fairly recently Africans in different areas had little communication with each other, but the independence of Ghana has led to a spate of pan-African conferences and increasing interterritorial communication. It seems probable that Africans who are currently passive will in the future derive political expectations vicariously through the experiences of their counterparts elsewhere as well as through their own direct experience.

If predicting the future from the hypothesis is difficult and likely to become more so, postdiction is still possible and necessary to test the validity of the generalization. In postdictive analysis the government policy is a given, and the hypothesis indicates the African reaction. The superficial empirical analysis presented here is suggestive but not conclusive. For a systematic testing of the conflict-drive hypothesis as formulated for African political situations, a careful study would have to be made of journalistic accounts describing the course of events leading up to an outburst of violence. Unbiased analysts would rate each situation in terms of the amount of contradictory stimuli impinging on the Africans, and the reliability of such ratings would have to be established.

It would also be desirable to attempt to find cases where the conditions leading to conflicting expectations were present but no violence against Europeans resulted. A detailed study of such cases might reveal the degree of conflict necessary for such a violent outcome and alternative ways of coping with this kind of intrapersonal conflict.

Further tests of the hypothesis could be made in other parts of the world where colonial situations exist. For example, the Poznan riots and Hungarian revolt followed the Soviet "thaw" of 1956, while the Tibetan revolt appeared to be provoked by a shift from a "soft" to a "hard" policy by the Chinese administration.² The conflict-drive hypothesis might be the most parsimonious explanation of these contrasting events. Comparative studies within different areas of the world would provide replicated empiri-

cal tests of the hypothesis and might yield some general conclusions regarding the nature of anticolonial violence.

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² I am grateful to Robert J. Alperin for this suggestion.

NOTES

NOTES

THE CLUBS IN CRISIS: RACE RELATIONS IN THE NEW WEST AFRICA¹

L. PROUDFOOT AND H. S. WILSON

ABSTRACT

This is an attempt to consider race relations in a British West African colony by the approach of small-group sociology. Changes in the structure of society, notably in and through the civil service, have affected the standing of the exclusive white clubs. These clubs, under official pressure and African challenge from outside and inside, have felt the impact of younger Europeans strongly identified with Africans. The article describes the reaction of a particular club and the methods by which it has met the crisis and contained the challenge.

Britain, as we know, is committed to giving independence to the West African colonies. These territories, whether already independent or not, are now ruled by elected Negro governments. Colonial civil servants, most of whom in the higher ranks are British, serve under local ministers with whom lies, in theory at least, responsibility for policy. At the head of the hierarchy stands the

governor himself, a nominee of the Colonial Office. In the separate ministries are the permanent secretaries, of whom the financial secretary ranks as the most senior. Then, within the technical departments which, for the sake of economic development in countries short of capital, have had to be created by central government are those officials who have risen to managerial status, such as the general manager, railways, the director of the public works department, and so on. Below these also rank many grades and sorts of technicians. The result is that colonial society tends to be hierarchical in the upper-income groups. In provincial administration, again, regional and district commissioners execute the will of the government and, in an inoffensive way suited to the times, maintain a little state. Characteristically, on formal occasions most of those listed here are entitled to wear dress uniforms.

¹ G. Balandier has discussed the social relations of colonial situations in Africa in *Sociologie Actuelle de l'Afrique Noire* (Paris, 1955) and in *Sociologie de Brazzaville Noire* (Paris, 1955); in *Race Relations in World Perspective* (ed. A. W. Lind [Honolulu, 1956], pp. 145-66), Balandier has considered the social effects of the increased number of European women residents in Africa since 1945. Ione Acquah (*Accra Survey* [London, 1958]) gives a most comprehensive survey of a West African city and includes European activities. C. Sofer and R. Ross ("Some Characteristics of an East African European Population," *British Journal of Sociology*, II [1951], 315) deal with Stone-town, a middle-size (i.e., one-club as against no-club or more-than-one-club) East African European community. Melville J. Herskovits ("Some Thoughts on American Research in Africa," *African Studies Bulletin*, I [November, 1958]) comments on the need for further social analysis of European groups in Africa.

The coming or proximity of independence has not seriously disturbed the Europeans who serve in these countries. Since there are no settlers among them, they are not concerned with handing on political or social privileges. They are transients and know it.

What has perturbed them, however, is the official policy of "Africanization,"² that is, the systematic replacement of Europeans in senior posts by local Africans as, by training and experience, they become eligible. The educated part of the local population presses for jobs and promotion. Though confident of their superiority in technical posts, at least, Europeans feel insecure and resent appointments made from confessedly racialist motives.

Moreover, it is "Africanization" rather than independence which threatens their traditional social life. After the day's work, with its inevitable strain of culture contacts and language problems, it was pleasant to withdraw into the expatriate clubs. These, though they varied among themselves, were alike in being exclusive and became both symbols of communal unity and agencies of social control.³ Club servants, indeed, were Africans but drawn normally from among tribal illiterates—that is, from among economic dependents, not competitors. "Africanization," however, by lifting Negroes in the social hierarchy, made it difficult to exclude them from club life. The color bar became too obvious to ignore; it could no longer be represented as the distinction between the upper and the lower grades of the colonial service hierarchy or as that between management on the one hand and mere employees on the other.⁴ Here was a direct challenge to the clubs, a challenge at times openly offered in the newspapers.

² Following local terminology, we use "African" henceforth for a black man and "European" for a white man.

³ Sofer and Ross point out that the major social division among Stonetown Europeans has come to be that between the clubbable and the non-clubbable (*op. cit.*).

⁴ It is ironic that Sofer and Ross, observing a European club in the very different political situation of East Africa, found it in a similar dilemma. There it was expected to promote white unity, but failed when the arrival of a large group of low-status Europeans made racial inclusiveness incompatible with social exclusiveness. Then the club, by marking off the main division within the European group, had the reverse of the desired effect (*ibid.*).

Sierra Leone is a small colony, and even its capital city has a population of only about one hundred thousand. Of these, something under three thousand are Lebanese and Indians, and about one thousand Europeans (men, women, and children). This handful of Europeans, however, has long maintained three clubs in the city.

The Government Club of higher civil servants and their peers, being the most susceptible to influence from above, was the first to accept the social implications of official policy and admit two or three African members. True, there is a report, generally accepted, that the decision even here was precipitated by a crisis: the brigadier of the local army detachment, whose mess included one or two African officers, let it be understood that he would resign his own membership if all his officers were not equally eligible. Moreover, the governor of the colony himself has set an example of social mixing with Africans and is reported to have expressed himself vigorously on its desirability. In such circumstances the compliance of his subordinates was inevitable.

The Government Club and the Golf Club overlap considerably in membership, while the third, the Railway Club, with which this paper is more particularly concerned, is much more plebeian than, and quite different from, the other clubs. What is locally thought of, par excellence, as "government" (a useful if unfamiliar concept embracing the senior civil servants in the ministries and in provincial administration) is hardly represented within it. All European railway men, however, are expected to belong—the subscription is automatically deducted from their salaries unless they protest. These are the only full members. Honorary members are drawn mainly from other government technical departments, such as those of road transport and public works, from the younger employers in commerce, and from the local university college staff, who, not being government servants or confined by the restrictions of mining compounds, go where their tastes lead them. Women are admitted neither to membership nor even to

the status of guests. They are welcome, but their existence is not constitutionally recognized.

The amenities of the Railway Club are certainly the best in the city: a safe swimming pool, a paddling pool for children, an excellent playing field, nets for cricket practice, tennis courts, a large and well-kept billiard room with two full-size tables, a room big enough for dancing, a small library of popular books, and a well-stocked and efficiently run bar. Such a range of possible indulgences naturally draws a varied clientele. Most members, however, are monovalent in their use of the club. The bar and the billiard room, traditionally associated in Britain, attract some of the same people, but many are content with the bar alone (none, however, with the billiard room alone). The sportsmen are rarely drinkers: a glass of squash after a game is sufficient for them. They seldom appear at night. The younger family men may bring their children to the pool, but they drink little and spend most of their nights at home.

The bar is the center of club life. The sportsmen and family men come and go, but the faces at the bar are remarkably constant. Here are to be found the lowest grade of European workers in the railway, the permanent way-inspectors who supervise maintenance of the track and the senior locomotive foremen who maintain the engines. With them, more intermittently, are a few junior technicians, much younger and not much more highly paid. In general, these are college men, whereas the permanent way-inspectors are the products of an older educational system in which the lower orders of society were given mere literacy and some slight craft training.

On most nights, a little farther from the bar sit a few of the senior and more highly paid railwaymen, of whom two or three are committee members; they may or may not have wives with them. These are the habitués of the club, and it is from these two groups that gossip emanates and a public opinion is formed. Politically, the club is dominated by those who sit near the bar, not

by those who stand beside it. Strong accents, indicative of a man's place of origin, are common to both groups. The upper-class English accent familiarly "guyed" in the United States is absent.

The committee, however, normally includes a few senior railway men who are not habitués. So much, at least, is conceded to the hierarchical principle. Both the men at the bar and those who sit near it live for the most part in the railway compound. Hence practically their whole non-working life turns upon the club, which is the dominant building, physically and socially.

Though no statistics are available, it is probable that the club members have more friendly and intimate contacts with Africans than do most other groups. Many have African mistresses, and these relationships may be semi-permanent. (On the other hand, no railway member is known to have a lawfully wedded African wife.) One or two of the jobs in the railway—for example, those dealing with the acquisition of land—take the European specialist deep into the most intimate complex of relationships in the whole of African life. The honorary members of the club are not behind in this. Thus the university lecturers are often on terms of affection and mutual ease with their students. Hence there is little doubt that the introduction of African members is a problem only to the group, not to the majority of individuals. Yet this club was the last, not the first, to concede African membership.

This is not so anomalous as it appears. We have seen that the most protocol-ridden club, the one most affected by outside influences and the least determined by its own inner development, was the first to capitulate. Yet the same club long excluded army senior non-commissioned officers and warrant officers, who were almost all Europeans.⁵ Such a barrier at the Railway Club would be unthinkable. The determining

⁵ Traditionally, officialdom in Sierra Leone was felt to be more exclusive and socially pretentious than elsewhere on the West Coast, and this was sharply resented by Europeans engaged in commerce (*West Africa*, February 3, 1917, p. 6).

factor has been not radicalism in the Government Club but consistency in institutionalized attitudes in the Railway Club.

The prehistory of attempts to introduce Africans into the club once more entails a reference to the army. When an African civilian first attempted to enter the club, he was at once repulsed; the army was less easy to resist. After a convivial session elsewhere, a member brought the African civilian and a non-member European to the Railway Club. The party was shown the door on the quite legitimate grounds that any one member was permitted only one guest. (Needless to say, the rule is not at all times observed or applied.)

The army was much more difficult to deal with. It had been the custom to hold formal dances, to which the elite of colony society was invited. Group invitations were issued to the officers' messes ("The Commanding Officer and his Officers," etc). The dances were successful and had a certain social brilliance which other club activities could rarely rival. When the first African army officer, together with his wife, presented himself at one of those occasions, he, unlike the civilian just mentioned, had to be admitted. Thereafter, however, the custom of issuing group invitations was discontinued, and the dances began to decline in frequency and success. Nowadays, they are rarely held.

For two years before a decision was reached about African members, the general factors militating in favor of admitting them had been reinforced by one other factor of quite symbolic propriety. The land on which the club stands is the property of the railway. It was made over to the club by unwritten agreement between a past governor and a past general manager. So the title by which the club holds it is somewhat tenuous and insecure. One of the liberal railway men, a man in the nature of his job deeply involved with Africans, began to insinuate that the African minister in charge of transport could and, if he were displeased with the club's policy, probably would, cut the ground from under its foundations. (There

is no evidence that the minister had any such intention.) The opinion was thereby created that the club would have to admit Africans if it wanted to survive at all.

The prestige of this member, whom we will call Mac, was very high. He was the highest paid of the habitués of the club; his job was very specialized and entailed some knowledge of law; he lived on the railway compound itself; he oscillated between the bar and the seats near the bar, and he was a member of the committee. Moreover, he was a strong partisan; having been invited to the Government Club on one occasion, his reaction had been to stalk out in boredom and disgust. He was, by the way, a Scot, not an Englishman. Though prepared to conduct a campaign designed to demoralize the resistance of those who had the strongest will to resist African membership, he was not himself willing to take the lead in introducing any individual African. This role he preferred to reserve for two of his friends, honorary members whom we will call Len and Henry.⁶

The first attempt of the kind was abortive. After some discussion with the responsible minister, turning on the question of social amenities, the secretary of the Railway Workers' Union (which is all-African) sounded a few individuals about whether they would propose him. His was to be a test case, which would, if successful, open the club and turn it into a recreational center for the senior African railwaymen. Mac agreed to support him, but the lead was taken by the president of the club himself. The president was not a club habitué, but he stood high in the hierarchy and used the club to a moderate extent. When he mooted the question, he took a very strong

⁶ The roles Mac allotted to Len and Henry and the committee's response illustrate the use of a stranger to initiate controversial actions. Frankenburg (*Village on the Border* [London, 1957]) describes this tactic in a small Welsh village. Such a role is familiar to Europeans in West Africa, which has had to face many awkward but unavoidable decisions just before and after independence and finds a group of readily identifiable strangers in key positions, i.e., expatriates, a great asset.

line, inferring that, if the application were rejected, he might himself resign in protest. It was rumored about that there was a vacancy in the railway establishment immediately senior to the post which he held and that he might consider himself eligible for it. Hence, rightly or wrongly, the conclusion was drawn that he was seeking to curry favor with Africans as a means to his own promotion.⁷ Moreover, the union secretary was endeared to the bulk of the members neither by his function nor by his personal relations.⁸ Therefore, the committee offered unexpectedly stiff resistance.

The union secretary, if he wished to join, would have to apply in due form, that is, he would have to be proposed by six members, and his application would have to be exhibited in the club for the specified period while members took note of it. Only the president and Mac committed themselves to him; when asked if they would blackball him, the rest quite properly refused to reply.

At this juncture, two things happened almost simultaneously: the president of the club went on leave and therefore escaped from what otherwise might have been an untenable position, and the union secretary, hearing from Mac that it was doubtful whether his candidature would succeed, announced that he would not press it. A repulse, he said, would make him a laughing stock among his own people. He then joined the Golf Club, quarreled with two of the committee men who had opposed him, and professed the opinion at large that, as he had now joined a "better" club, there was no point in his joining the Railway Club.

Meantime, two of the intransigent com-

mittee members, both old club habitués, went to the acknowledged head of the railway hierarchy. They argued that the club president had been far too willing to confer upon others amenities to which he himself did not greatly contribute and which he perhaps did not value highly. In short, he was trading in other men's privileges and should be restrained. Their argument was impressive, but even more so was the example and opinion of the colonial governor himself. He had mixed with Africans himself and encouraged others to do so. The railway head therefore staggered them by replying that, however good a case they had, he was not prepared to go against the express wishes of the head of the state, and the best thing they could do was to go out and find some African members.

As a result, three African members were accepted immediately afterward. All were railway men, popular individuals proposed by their own immediate European workmates. The constitutional safeguards which had been brought to bear upon the union secretary's application were disregarded. The applications were not published in the club for the prescribed period, and the whole business was rushed through. The committee clearly feared that some diehard would organize resistance. Hence, by the end of 1958, the position in the Railway Club was much the same as that in the other clubs of the colony capital. There was, however, one difference: whereas Africans often did not avail themselves of their membership in the other clubs, they had not yet even set foot inside the Railway Club.

The annual general meeting, held in early January, revealed the tensions of the previous months. Thus, the new president referred openly to the effect on the committee of the fear that the club's land could be taken from them. Moreover, the committee brought up for discussion two amendments to the rules. One proposed a new safeguard against easy admission to membership. It provided that, if six members sent in written objections to any candidate, giving their

⁷ The same imputation of motive could have been made even if there had been no coincidental vacancy. The Manchester school of anthropologists recently has paid special attention to the importance of gossip, including such malicious gossip, in maintaining a sense of community (e.g., E. Colson, *The Makah Indians* [Manchester, 1953]; R. Frankenburg, *op. cit.*).

⁸ Formerly a journalist, he contributed violently xenophobic articles to the press and had attacked white clubs earlier in the year on the local radio forum. He was later charged with misusing union funds and fled the country.

reasons, the committee should be debarred from considering him at all.

In discussion it appeared that the committee members were taking thought for their own protection. To reject an African might rouse public hostility which could be diverted onto them in their jobs. The new clause would conceal responsibility.

The body of the meeting reacted very unfavorably to this proposal. One railway member argued vigorously that it would lead to intrigue, backstairs work, and the formation of cliques. A committee member who did not speak to the motion was pointedly reminded by the president that he had been a party to the decision. He replied that he had thought about it and changed his mind. Significantly, nobody said outright that a club's first duty was to preserve its solidarity by excluding people who were personally unacceptable. Only one honorary member, Mac's friend Len, spoke for the motion. The committee was heavily defeated.

At the end of the meeting the same honorary member who had supported the "six objectors" clause rose to ask whether African guests, as distinct from members, could or should be invited: the rules permitted this, but a good club lived more by custom than by rule, and custom was against it. This time, the spokesman from the floor who had most vehemently opposed the "six objectors" clause spoke in favor of African guests. The president of the club, however, gave an answer as unexceptionable as it was equivocal: he drew the attention of members to the rule about the admission of guests, in which there was nothing to exclude Africans, but he then pointed out that another rule prescribed expulsion of members whose behavior derogated from the dignity and decorum of the club. Hasty asides informed the uninitiated that one railway member had threatened to introduce his African mistress as a guest.

Throughout all these exchanges members explicitly accepted the authority of the club, and, while the traditionalists showed some tendency to fall back on punctilio, they did not at this stage strain it. The committee,

however, had been defeated in form and had suffered the shock of seeing some of their own group default on a question over which they were committed—the "six objectors" clause. Later attempts to maintain committee solidarity will shortly be noted.

Immediately after the meeting, when there was an unusually large and heterogeneous group of members present and when, of course, the power group was at full strength, Len, the honorary member who had inquired about African guests, introduced an African guest. The African was the first to enter the club in due form since the affair of the army officer years before. He was a senior driver in the government transport service, youngish, and familiar with Europeans through his association with the university lecturers whose student he had been. His comportment—cool, quiet, and completely self-possessed—was generally admired, even by those who were by no means disposed to welcome his presence. We have permission to quote from his own account:

At the Railway Club: My Observations on Sunday 25th January, 1959.—I walked in confidence. There was Henry, Mac, and Mrs. Mac. I was introduced to Mrs. Mac so I sat by her on a canvas chair. Every European was looking at me with surprise. I didn't mind their looks very much. Len and I were discussing my essay on Woman Damages.⁹ After that I was served with a bottle of Coca Cola. Mrs. Mac, who I assessed to be one of the European ladies suitable for service in South Africa where Europeans hardly meet with Africans, was sitting beside me. She didn't like it, though, but her husband likes Africans, because he wants to learn. This beautiful lady was reading my essay on woman damages with smiles on her face and the only comment she made to her husband was, "This is why you wanted to become a Muslim, I'm sure." I replied that this is not the Muslim custom, but a custom recognised among one or two of the half-pagan tribes of the country.

Not long after this Mrs. J. and her husband, Mr. J., arrived. They were coming to

⁹ A local system of compensation paid to husbands (usually rich) by the cuckold-makers (usually poor) who have tampered with their wives.

meet my friends but when they saw me sitting there, Mr. J., who is my Acting Director, failing to realise the fact that he is only my boss when I am wearing the Department's uniform (I don't think he will ever encourage an African in his house or mix with them outside his official duties), came in, but didn't stay, and went to the veranda and sat there with his children. His wife sat with us but didn't speak to me, and I didn't speak to her either.

In about five minutes' time both ladies left our company and joined J. outside. The Club house was well decorated. The bar was first-rate; some of the seats were decent though very old. Some white men were standing in the bar, drinking, at the same time watching me over their shoulders. I watched them, too.

I was fed up with being the only African among about fifty Europeans, and I only stayed to please my friends. If all Africans were to join such Clubs as these, I would be the last. [From this point the account becomes an attack on those Africans who wish to break into, or break up, the European clubs and offers the countersuggestion that Africans should create their own clubs.]

The next episode was the introduction of two Africans on a Saturday night a fortnight later. One was a full member who was looked after by the secretary of the club, the other, who was assistant secretary of the railway union, was a guest. This guest was introduced by Henry in the company of Mac and Len. A man with the full African capacity for revelry, he drank merrily into the small hours, played a game of billiards, and danced with the two European girls who took the floor. On the other hand, the African member made a shorter night of it and confined himself to drinks and a game of snooker. The member's presence was therefore much less significant than that of the guest, whose unconcealed enjoyment could not be ignored. While it could be argued that neither the first African guest, whose account we have quoted, nor the African member just mentioned showed any great pleasure in the club, the assistant secretary of the union was a manifest challenge to any generalization from these cases. Moreover, he brought into the club that complicated region where industrial and interracial relations overlap

and from which the clubs have been the usual refuge.

Hence, at the next committee meeting there were further signs of concern. A new African candidate for membership was proposed by one of the existing African members. There was no disputing his personal eligibility, but the president of the club wanted to know where the process of admitting Africans was to stop. There might, for example, come a time when the majority of railway members at an annual meeting were Africans and could vote each other into the committee. That would be the end of the club. (As the number of African members would only be six and as only five of them would be full members, even if the new candidate were admitted, this was rather a remote contingency.) After some discussion the candidate was admitted but clearly from a sense of impotence to resist rather than the desire to have him.

Attention turned several times to Len. His attitude was unsatisfactory: he had introduced African guests far too frequently. Henry, also a member of the college staff and a member of the committee when Len was nominated, spoke up in his defense. He had not exceeded the prescribed limits to the invitation of guests, and no one could argue that his one guest had not conducted himself well. The most dissatisfied member of the committee then referred to the assistant secretary of the trade union: Len had brought him in, too. "Henry" then pointed out that he had himself introduced this guest. At this there was hasty withdrawal. Clearly, the committee was anxious to maintain its solidarity after the defeats of the annual general meeting.

Nonetheless, the members returned to the charge against Len, and the president finally volunteered "to speak to him." The president held that such occasions of combined sociability and business as Len and his guest had used the club for were in fact necessary and desirable, but they should take place not at the club but in one of the public bars or hotels.

Both at this meeting and at the previous

one, there were attempts to impose further restrictions on the right to introduce guests, but it was finally decided that a punctilious enforcement of existing rules would meet the case.

Thus, as matters now stand, the Railway Club has conformed to those symbolic claims which African opinion in the colony has recently lodged. The move to convert the symbolic right of Africans to belong into actual frequency of social intercourse within the club has been stiffly resisted both by moral suasion ("speaking to Len") and by an increased resort to enforcement of rules. The leadership of the power group within the club has not been seriously challenged, but the club has reacted to African membership as to a threat which, while it cannot be resisted, yet may be confined to unimportant dimensions. It has sought to consolidate itself, as far as possible, by the classical mechanism of finding a scapegoat. The club, like any other institution, needs above all to perpetuate itself. To maintain its recognizable individuality, it depends less upon rule than upon the tacit consent to custom of both internal and external society. Where external society changes, the alteration is felt less by some clubs than by others. All defend themselves, but the club which has developed the strongest inner organization is by far the most redoubtable.

From the African side, various attitudes can be distinguished. The more strenuous "nationalists" attack the clubs as symbols of the old order. These spokesmen, however, are rarely the most "clubbable" of men. That part of their motivation most readily shared by other Africans is their hatred of being treated as strangers in their own land.¹⁰

It is well to realize that African and European social customs, even between men on the same job, in the same city, and with the same incomes, differ so widely that it is ex-

tremely difficult to unite them in the same club. Africans, for example, do not usually play billiards or golf, and very few can swim or care to bathe for pleasure. Europeans, on the other hand, rarely play table tennis unless they are young and, if they play draughts—which is unusual, anyway—they do so by entirely different rules from those in use among the local African devotees of the game. Even the lowest common factor, drink, is not common to the Muslims. Again an attempt to observe a club created with good will on both sides to be intercommunal revealed the following in the course of six months: not once did an African bring his wife, and not once did a European arrive with a woman who was not his wife. Finally, English men often like to be left alone in their clubs to enjoy, almost ostentatiously, their privacy in public. This seems incomprehensible to Africans.

Hence, in the upshot, it remains probable that this colony at least will see the white clubs maintain themselves until they disappear altogether, as they seem to have done in independent India. In general, Africans only wish to join them in order to demonstrate their right to do so; in general, Europeans do not want them anyway. Only one African has visited the Railway Club in the last six months, and his visit passed off without remark. The power group has held its position. Mac and Henry have gone to other jobs elsewhere. Len appears to be tolerated as an amiable aberrant, now that the traditional character of the club is no longer threatened.

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¹⁰ The recently founded People's National Party once scored a considerable propaganda success at the expense of the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party by maintaining that restrictions upon access to the diamond territory made Sierra Leoneans "strangers in their own country."

NOTES

NOTES

THE KALABARI *EKINE* SOCIETY: A BORDERLAND OF RELIGION AND ART

ROBIN HORTON

ONE of the pillars of traditional Kalabari culture is the *Ekine* Men's Society, otherwise known as *Sekiapu*—'The Dancing People'. But although many Kalabari talk of *Ekine* as 'one of our highest things', it is an institution remarkably difficult to pin down and define.

On the face of it, *Ekine* serves many disparate ends. At a superficial glance, it appears as a religious institution, designed to solicit the help of the water spirits¹ through invocations and dramatic representations of them by masquerades. A second glance suggests that these masquerades are recreational as much as religious in their intent. Yet again, many of the masquerades seem to be important status-symbols. And finally, *Ekine* often appears as a significant organ of government. A day-to-day description of the society's activities in any one community would reveal these aspects as tightly woven or tangled together. In this paper, however, it will be our task not only to unravel them, but to attempt a distinction between those which are essential features of the institution, and those which are incidental.

ESSENTIAL VALUES OF *EKINE*

Perhaps our best point of entry to the complicated tangle of values realized in *Ekine* lies through the myths which recount the origins of the institution. For these supply not only a theory of how *Ekine* came into being, but also the Kalabari idea of what it was founded for.

The most elaborate of these myths tells how the dancing water spirits abducted *Ekineba*, a beautiful woman of a certain delta town, and took her to their home beneath the creeks. The mother of the water spirits was angry at what they had done, and commanded her children to take *Ekineba* back to the land of men. Before returning her, however, each water spirit showed her its special play; and when she returned to her home, she taught the people all the plays she had seen. The plays became very popular and were constantly performed. But the young men found it difficult to obey a certain rule which the water spirits had imposed on her—namely, that whenever her people put on one of her plays, she must always be the first to beat the drum. After they had disobeyed this rule three times, the water spirits lost patience and took *Ekineba* away for good. Since then, men have taken her as the patron goddess of the masquerade; and the *Ekine* Society which organizes its performance is named after her.

This myth and its variants give us a valuable lead.² In the first place, they stress that the various masquerade plays of *Ekine* are derived from the water spirits and in

¹ For a sketch of Kalabari society and of the various categories of Kalabari gods, see my 'Kalabari World-View: an Outline and Interpretation', *Africa*, July 1962.

² The *Ekine* myths exemplify recurrent Kalabari patterns. Thus the most elaborate of them shows

a new institution introduced by a goddess who is typical of the village heroes generally: a figure coming from outside the community, who lived with men and taught them, but who finally disappeared leaving no descendants when men failed to keep to the rules she had laid down. The theme

a sense represent them. Apart from anything else, then, the plays are seen as religious activities. Yet, at the same time, they are said to have caught on among men because they were enjoyable in themselves. And this suggests that Kalabari also see them as an art or recreation.

Let us first of all take a closer look at the religious aspect.

1. *Ekine as a Religious Cult-Group*

Every Kalabari community has its own *Ekine* society, independent of those of other communities. Each society stages a cycle of thirty to fifty masquerade plays—a cycle which in former times was probably completed in the drier part of every year. The commonest way of beginning the cycle is for *Ekine* members to go down in canoes to a spot far out in the creeks known as ‘Beach of the Water Spirits’. Here they call in the spirits, telling them that their plays are about to begin and that they should come to attend them. The spirits are believed to return to the town with their invokers. This done, the *Ekine* members offer a dog to their patron goddess, with a prayer for the success of her plays. All is now ready for the masquerades to start.

Each masquerade play is associated with one or more water spirits; and the actual performance is preceded by invocations and offerings to these spirit ‘owners’. During the play, which usually takes place on the following morning, the water spirits themselves are supposed to be ‘walking with’ the dancers who represent them, and their close attendance often passes over into a state where people say that they have actually possessed their dancers. Possession, though quite an ordeal for the masquerader, is in fact encouraged, and is regarded as the seal of a successful performance.

When the last of the plays has been performed, a second set of rites winds up the cycle. The usual form of winding-up ceremony is called *owu aru sin*—‘Stretching the Canoe of the Water People’. Dancers representing every play perform together in a single morning, just before the ebb of the tide. At the ebb, all the maskers go down to a special beach known as the ‘Pouring-Out Place of the Water Spirits’, where they strip off their costumes and bathe. In so doing, they are believed to be dispatching the spirits back to their creeks.

In all this there is much that resembles the normal run of Kalabari rituals designed to solicit help from the gods. At a cursory glance, the preliminary invocations and offerings to masquerade spirits are not very different from those given to other spirits. And the masquerade itself looks like one more among the several forms of dramatic presentation which appear at the climax of typical Kalabari religious rites. On looking closer, however, we see some important differences of emphasis. Thus in the usual

of a woman introducing the plays and men taking them over also exemplifies a recurrent mythical pattern, in which men assume control of what women originate. The latter probably reflects a paradox of which Kalabari show themselves aware in a number of situations: that of a society whose most important assets—people—are brought into the world by women and are then taken over by men. This theme of the woman creator of the male

institution seems widespread in West Africa. A striking example is recorded in B. Holas, *Les Masques Kono*, Paris, 1952. From the Kono assertion that women first discovered and danced masks, Holas infers that male-dominated Kono society was once matriarchal. An interpretation similar to the one I have just offered seems more in accord with known facts and probabilities.

Kalabari ritual, both the invocations and offerings, and the dramatic presentations that follow them, are largely directed towards obtaining general benefits such as health, wealth, plentiful issue, and peace. In the masquerade rituals, on the other hand, this is not really so. True, the preliminary invocations often include requests for the usual benefits. But they are as much taken up with requests for the success of the masquerade performance itself. Indeed, they contain a whole inventory of the things that make for a successful performance. They ask that the masker should be given nimble legs and light arms; that nothing should press heavily upon him; that his ears should be wide and clear to hear the drum; that it should seem as if he and the drummer had planned every step of the performance between them; that the drum should 'enter the dancer's legs'; that the spirit of the masquerade should possess him. The place given to such requests is consistent with many other signs of concern for the masquerade as something valuable in itself. There is, for instance, the vigorous practice with which the dancers prepare for the actual performance—an element which is quite absent from other Kalabari rituals. And again, there are the offerings made to a variety of village gods before a major play, all with the sole aim of ensuring its success. Unlike other dramatic presentations, then, the masquerade is not a means of getting something out of the gods: it is an end in itself.

The religious aspect of *Ekine* activities reveals further peculiarities when we come to ask what place the spirit 'owners' of the masquerades occupy in the total Kalabari world-picture. For we find that these gods are hardly ever drawn from the ranks of the water spirits who control the community's surrounding creeks, and who therefore have to be taken into constant account in the struggle to keep alive. Rather, they are drawn from among the countless hosts of water spirits who are vaguely known to inhabit the creeks beyond the domains of the community. Such spirits, because they live beyond the normal range of communal activity, are hardly ever called upon to help cope with any of life's vicissitudes outside the context of the masquerade.¹

Stranger still, some of the spirits involved are not only unimportant in practical terms: they are actually dangerous. Thus the myths of masquerade spirits like *Egbelegbe* and *Agiri* tell how, before these spirits were taken up by their present hosts, a succession of other communities had got rid of them after finding them dangerous to their players and insatiable in their demand for human sacrifices. Only the present hosts, so the myths go, were brave enough to ignore the dangers and persuasive enough to make these spirits accept animals rather than human beings as their food.

A final peculiarity appears in the fact that, although all the more important plays are associated with water spirits, there are some which are not. The well-known *Kirimani* play, for instance, represents mere animals who are in no way objects of a cult; and one or two other plays represent frankly fictitious figures.

In short, *Ekine* as a cult-group is principally devoted to marginal and even obnoxious gods whose only service to men lies in ensuring the success of the plays that represent them. The function of these gods, moreover, can be at least partially taken over by figures that are not gods at all. *Ekine* is certainly a religious institution; but it is an unusual one by Kalabari or any other standards. Its activities only make full

¹ A solitary exception is *Ngbula*, whose characterization as the native doctor of the water people is consistent with the use of his costume to drive out evil spirits during a disease epidemic.

sense when we remember the clue offered by the origin myths, which suggest that its ends are as much artistic as they are religious.

2. *Ekinge as a Society of Artists*

Since the masquerade performance itself seems to be the end to which most *Ekinge* rituals are directed, it is time we looked at it in more detail.

(a) *Verbalized content of the masquerade.* The subject-matter of the various plays, revealed in comments and accompanying songs, shows a considerable variety. Perhaps the commonest theme is that of the ferocious male warrior, laying about him with machet or spear, his violence set off by the plump, comely, slow-moving figure of his wife. This pair is portrayed by some of the most widely distributed masquerades such as *Agiri*, *Egbelegbe*, *Egbekoro*, and *Seki*. Then there is the dignified, opulent 'house head' portrayed by masquerades like *Gbassa* and *Alagba*. Or the massive, stolid character portrayed by the maskers of *Otobo*—a water spirit who is thought of as part man, part hippopotamus, and who is addressed in song as 'Beast who holds up even the flowing tide'. By way of contrast, there is the cunning, amoral hypocrite portrayed by *Ikaki*—'Tortoise'. Or the sexy, good-for-nothing aristocrat *Igbo*, of whom they sing: 'His father sent him to market to buy yams; but instead he bought woman's vagina. O! *Igbo*, son of a chief! O! *Igbo*, son of a chief!' Or again, there is the native doctor *Ngbula*, grunting around with grim concentration in search of bad medicines and evil spirits: suspicious like all of his profession that people are talking ill of him, and breaking off from time to time to make ferocious charges at his supposed detractors among the *Ekinge* members. Female water spirits, too, sometimes take the central place in a masquerade. Notable among these is *Igoni*; a garrulous, self-pitying old widow who alternately bemoans her own and everyone else's troubles.

Another element of most masquerade performances is the *Egberi* or 'Embellishment'. This is a short tableau representing some episode in which the principal figure of the play becomes involved with other water spirits. Common themes of *Egberi* are domestic episodes, such as quarrels between husband and wife's brother over custody of wife and children, and quarrels between husband, wife, and lover. A common minor protagonist in these domestic scenes is *Kekobo*—'Testicle Man'. *Kekobo* suffers from an enormous elephantiasis of the scrotum, usually conveyed by suspending a calabash between the dancer's legs. Elephantiasis is a complaint which is said to affect sorcerers and other wicked people; and *Kekobo* is an oft-recurring reminder of evil in the world, at once comic and slightly sinister. Other themes of *Egberi* include troubles in lineage or 'house', which often feature sorcery duels between rival water men equipped with medicines in the form of leaf-sprigs. Sometimes, too, we see the figure of a powerful city-state king, embroiled with a group of recalcitrant chiefs.

All in all, the themes of Kalabari masquerades cover a great diversity of social experience, ostensibly drawn from the world of the water spirits, but recognizably reflecting the life of Kalabari town and village. The masquerades take no particular stand on behalf of the accepted moral code. Nor, though Kalabari confess to enjoying some plays because 'they bring hidden things to the town square' (this is a reaction to portrayals of such things as sexual intercourse and scrotal elephantiasis, which the spectators usually find highly comic), is the open portrayal of unmentionable things

one of their major aims. It is simply that they are inspired by things as they are, and not by things as they ought to be. The whole of social experience is grist to their mill—both public happenings and things generally kept secret and concealed. Indeed, by adding together the contents of all the plays, one could build up a patchwork that covered most areas of Kalabari social life.

(b) *The drums and the dance.* Diverse as they are, however, the verbalized themes of the masquerade are never very elaborate. All that can be said about the characters portrayed in a particular play takes no more than a sentence or two. And the plots of the *Egberi* tableaux are sketchy in the extreme—especially if one compares them with the rich narrative which Kalabari weave about the water spirits in other contexts. There is, in fact, a good reason for this sketchiness and brevity. For the masquerade is not intended as the enactment of verbal narrative. Its dominant symbols are those of rhythmic gesture, dictated by the drum; and in so far as its verbal commentaries have a use, it is one of directing attention to the broad area in which the meaning of the dance gestures lies. Words here provide no more than a bare, crude outline of meaning, and it is left to the language of the dance to fill in the detail which makes the masquerade rich and satisfying to its audience.

If an *Ekine* member is asked how he recognizes a particular play, he does not start to talk about the character portrayed or about the plot of the *Egberi*. He starts by imitating the rhythm of its drums; and perhaps, if there are no women about, by dancing a few of its characteristic steps. By this, he is able to convey the distinctive features of the play: for every masquerade has its own characteristic set of drum-rhythms, beaten on a characteristic combination of drums.¹

The first requisite of every masquerade dancer is that 'he should hear the drum well'. On the one hand, this means understanding the drum language and the instructions conveyed in it by the drummer.² On the other hand, it means an ability to translate the rhythm of the drums smoothly and faultlessly into the appropriate dance-steps. In fact, since Kalabari can supply verbal meanings for many drum-rhythms, they make no hard-and-fast distinction between understanding drummed messages and translating rhythms into dance gestures; and they are apt to treat these two skills as indivisible. In several masquerades (*Alagba*, *Otobo*, and *Igbo* are examples), an explicit test of 'hearing the drum' precedes the main body of the performance. For each dancer, the drummers beat the names of a score or so of the most important heroes and ancestors of the community; and as each name is called, the dancer must indicate correctly the direction of the owner's shrine. Every *Ekine* member must pass this test before entering the senior grade of the society. If he fails, he is expelled from the society altogether and can only rejoin after paying a fine of seven dogs to the patron goddess *Ekineba*. He may also be unmasked in front of the whole village—a disgrace which *Ekine* members maintain is enough to provoke suicide.

The value which *Ekine* sets on the dancer's attunement to the drum does much to explain why its members consider possession by the masquerade spirit to be the crowning achievement of the expert performer. In Kalabari thought, all symbols of the gods

¹ In his article on Northern Ibo Masquerades (*JRAI*, vol. xc, pt. 1, 1960), J. S. Boston shows that in this culture-area, too, it is a distinctive set of rhythms which is definitive of a particular masquerade play.

² Spoken Kalabari is a three-tone language. Drummed Kalabari reduces the three tones to two by equating middle and low, then abstracts the resulting two-tone patterns from their context of verbal syllables.

are instinct with their presence. Now the drum-rhythms of each masquerade are symbols of its spirit 'owner', and as such they too are vehicles of his presence. So, saying that the spirit 'owner' has taken charge of the dancer's body is a natural way of describing the ideal state of attunement in which the drum-rhythms seem to have taken over the man's movements from his conscious will and thought. That these are indeed two ways of describing the same experience is suggested by the reply of a gifted dancer whom I asked what it was like to become possessed during the dance. As he put it: 'One plays until, as it were, the drum pushes one around.'

There are, in fact, three major requisites of a good masquerade performance. First of all, an orchestra which can beat the drum rhythm not only correctly but in a way that 'shakes a man's spirit'. Secondly, a dancer good enough to translate the drum-rhythms smoothly into the gestures of the dance. And thirdly, the correct performance of preliminary offerings and invocations. These last are crucial. For though a dancer must have talent before he can be possessed, it is only these preliminary rites that can induce the spirit 'owner' to crown the performance by descending on him.

For Kalabari, then, the water spirits are not just beings represented by the masquerade. They themselves are part of the raw material which has to be coaxed into playing its part in the total work of art, just as any recalcitrant block of wood has to be coaxed by a sculptor. And now, I think, one can understand the cult of some of the masquerade spirits like *Agiri* and *Egbelelebe*, whose presence seemed so puzzling earlier on. For, dangerous and unbeneficial as they are, possession by them gives rise to some of the most spectacular of all performances. And in the risks which *Ekine* members take by putting on their plays, we can see the artist rising to the challenge of a highly difficult yet highly rewarding medium.

(c) *Costumes and headpieces.* The base of the masquerade costume is a skin-tight white tunic, covering the hands but leaving the feet free, into which the dancer is sewn. Strapped on over this is, first of all, a narrow cone made of palm midrib sections, which projects horizontally backward from the buttocks and forms the masker's tail. Then, in front, a large stomach-pad is strapped on to form another protruding organ known as *Igoli*. These two projections give the masker the characteristic body-shape of a water spirit. In many masquerades, too, a circlet of locust beans (*Igbiri*) is tied round each ankle: these circlets sound in time with the dancer's steps and supplement the rhythm of the drums.

The upper part of the costume is sewn on to the underside of the masquerade headpiece, and it drapes down over the dancer's torso when the headpiece is set in its place. So far as costume is concerned, there are certain cloths and accoutrements which generally go with particular masquerades, but there is a good deal of variability. The more definitive part of the dancer's material equipment is the headpiece—*oñu sibi*. Each play has one or more headpieces which are always distinctive. Some, like those of the *Ghassa* and *Alagha* plays, are made from cloth and tassels sewn on to large conical frames made of palm-midrib sections. More often, however, the headpiece includes a wooden, sculpted 'mask'. The headpiece is regarded as the seat of the masquerade's spirit 'owner'; and to it are directed the various invocations and offerings which precede the play proper.

Where the headpiece includes a wooden mask, the latter is regarded as something

distinct from the rest of the dancer's costume. It is said to be the 'name' of the masquerade, while everything else is just 'decoration'. Some say that it is because of the mask's presence that the dancer becomes possessed by the play's spirit owner; and they maintain that possession is most likely in those plays whose dress includes it. This view of the sculpted mask, as something whose function is first and foremost to establish the presence of a spirit rather than to impress spectators, explains a good deal that is otherwise puzzling about its use. Thus its commonest position is atop the dancer's head, with its principal features facing the sky and visible to spectators only when the man bends. Sometimes this concealment is increased when the mask is set in a great horizontal ruff of cloth and tassels sewn on the frame. And in yet other cases, it is entirely enclosed in 'decoration', and so totally invisible from any angle. Thus, in the *Egbekoro* masquerade, it is enclosed in a wrap of animal fur; and in one version of the *Otobo* masquerade, it is buried in an enormous stand of palm fronds.

This is not to say that the sculpted mask is never visible to the spectator. Thus in the *Ngbula* play, part of the character of the native doctor is his ugliness, which helps him in driving away evil spirits; and this ugliness is incorporated into the dance spectacle through the mask, which stands upright and visible on the dancer's head. Again, in the *Seki* and *Daraminaye* plays which represent water people believed to be half man, half crocodile, the long animal jaw of the mask is eminently visible; and by its striking extension of the human form it makes possible a new range of dance gestures.

But even where the sculpted mask does form part of the dance spectacle, it is never singled out for the sort of criticism and approval that greets the dance itself. To a lesser extent, this is true of both headpiece and costume generally. An exception, perhaps, is provided by those plays which portray opulent and chiefly figures: for in these a degree of flamboyance in cloths and ornaments is an appropriate mark of the sort of characters being represented, and this provides an excuse for all manner of conspicuous display on the part of the dancers. However, these flamboyantly dressed masquerades seem somehow contrary to the spirit of the institution; for I have heard *Ekine* members contrasting them almost scornfully, as 'dressing-up masquerades', with 'real, strong, playing masquerades' like *Ngbula*, *Seki*, and *Igbo*—all of which involve difficult and exhausting dance sequences and a minimum of showy costume. This brings us back to the point that the real core of the masquerade lies in the dance, and that by and large other elements are only considered important in so far as they contribute to it.

As a complex and sophisticated art, the masquerade is sustained by long training and careful organization. Almost as soon as they can walk male children are encouraged to imitate the masquerade performances of their elders, and their fathers or other male relatives often help them. At the age of fifteen or so, the boys pay a small sum to join *Kala Siri*—a junior replica of the *Ekine* society which operates in intervals between masquerade cycles proper.¹ *Kala Siri* organizes replicas of many of

¹ From here until the end of this paper, I shall use a comprehensive 'ethnographic present' to cover cultural patterns which are still fully extant in some communities, but which elsewhere live on only in

the older man's memories of his youth. Since the present paper aims to give a picture of the position of *Ekine* in the traditional culture which will be valid for the majority of Kalabari communities, this

the plays performed by *Ekine* itself; but it omits the plays of those strong and dangerous spirits who might retaliate violently for any mistakes made; and it does not court the presence of the masquerade spirits by preliminary offerings and invocations. *Kala Siri* is supervised by the 'Drum Master' of *Ekine*, whose services are rewarded by gifts.

The members of *Ekine* proper keep a look-out for promising youngsters in the *Kala Siri* plays. Any *Ekine* member may sponsor such a youngster for entry into the society; and having paid a small sum in cash or trade gin, the latter becomes a member of its junior grade—*Iwo Sekiapu*, or 'New Dancers'. He stays in this grade until the end of the first cycle of plays in which he has successfully danced a masquerade involving the shrine-pointing test. Then he joins the senior grade—*Elem Sekiapu* or 'Old Dancers'. After this he may also pay some small sums of money to join a number of clubs within the senior grade, each of which holds the right to play a particular masquerade and to teach it. The plays so vested in clubs are usually among those considered to be the most difficult and most demanding of specialist knowledge: thus they include *Igbo*, said to be the most taxing of all masquerades.

Each grade of *Ekine* has its head man—*Edi*—who is elected from among the senior-grade members of the society. Both senior and junior *Edi* offices are usually held by experienced dancers and their main duties are those of organizing plays. The other two standard offices in *Ekine* are those of *Ekine Alabo*—'Priest of *Ekine*', and *Akwa Alabo*—'Drum Master'. *Ekine Alabo* performs the invocations and offerings to the patron goddess *Ekine Ba*, and his office is generally assigned to an elderly member of the society with a long dancing career behind him. *Akwa Alabo* is the principal drummer of the society, and is the most talented drummer available in the community at the time of his predecessor's death.

It is notable that the criteria for entry to the various grades and offices of *Ekine* are all connected with skill in some aspect of the masquerade performance. They do not involve the considerations of wealth, pedigree, and political influence which govern advancement in Kalabari society at large. *Ekine* members themselves often stress this. Thus they say: 'In *Ekine*, everyone is equal to everyone else. Whatever

usage seems preferable to a long and tiresome string of qualifications.

In fact, there are a number of modern changes, bearing upon different communities with variable force, which have brought varying degrees of disruption to *Ekine* activities. Thus there is a switch from a pattern of productive activity based on the village itself, to a pattern involving shifting residence in a variety of fishing-camps often twenty miles or more from home; and where this switch has been most marked, people spend the greater part of the year away from the village. This makes the organization of frequent masquerades almost impossible; for each demands the presence of a goodly proportion of *Ekine* members, and it is extremely difficult to get such a quorum into the community at any one time. Another factor has been the avoidance of overt participation in traditional religious practices, which has become a powerful status symbol in certain communities. Where large numbers of mission-educated

people have ploughed back the fruits of their education into the traditional status system, power and influence have become associated with church-going, and hence with overt rejection of the old religion. This has had its most marked effect in the three offshoots of the New Calabar city-state. In these towns, many of the chiefs and other influential people are mission-educated and retired from jobs in commercial firms or government service. Although many of them privately subscribe to traditional religious beliefs and methods of dealing with misfortune, and many are enthusiastic spectators of the masquerade, few care to participate actively in *Ekine*. Fortunately, I was able to check the very full accounts given by older men in these New Calabar communities with first-hand observation in remoter villages like Soku, where these modern changes have not impinged with such force, and where the traditional patterns of *Ekine* activity appear to be largely intact.

people say on the path outside, it is not our business who owns whom, or whose father is greater than whose. We are here for laughing, drinking, and for the play.' There is, moreover, a feeling that these values have to be defended against the very different ones that prevail outside—a feeling which is crystallized in the society's attitude toward the dead. Thus every *Ekine* member is ritually expelled from the society when he dies, so that no dead person is ever a member. And any invocation of one's ancestors is strictly forbidden within the society's house. These rules are often explained as designed simply to prevent the dead from 'worrying' the living *Ekine* members when anything annoyed them. But a deeper and more perceptive explanation was given by the senior *Edi* of the Buguma¹ *Ekine*, who said: 'If people started pouring wine to the dead in the *Ekine* House, they would start to remember their forefathers; and from there, who-is-bigger-than-whom case would come out.' Underpinning as they do the whole ideology of lineage and kinship, the dead encourage all that competition for status and influence which relies on lineage and kin support, and all the invidious comparison based on the length and eminence of a man's Kalabari pedigree. Hence, by excluding any relations with the dead from its activities, *Ekine* stresses that such competition and comparison must be kept outside its confines.

Masquerading itself, of course, is a potential source of invidious comparisons between *Ekine* members. But here again, the organization of the plays does everything possible to eliminate it. Thus no matter what the play or who the player, the society's rules compel all members to turn out for the wake which is held on the night before the actual performance, and to join in the songs praising its water spirit 'owner'. On the day of the performance, all except the oldest and most decrepit members of the society must turn out to escort the actual masqueraders; and by giving of their utmost in dancing, capering, chasing off spectators who encroach on the arena, and emitting the hoarse, spirit-shaking cheers peculiar to *Ekine*, they must help to 'make the play strong'. The good *Edi* is the one who continually brings it home to those under him that each play is the collective concern of the entire *Ekine*—both those masquerading and those not. He is the one who continually reminds people that, the play's success or failure affects not only the reputation of the masker, but that of *Ekine* as a whole. His job, in short, is to ensure that every member of the society identifies himself with whoever is actually dancing any play.

Not only, then, are the rules of behaviour laid down in *Ekine* designed to exclude most of the preoccupations which reign beyond its confines: they are also designed to ensure that, in their concern for the masquerade, *Ekine* members react to the play and not to the player.

This difference between the values which dominate *Ekine* and those which dominate the society at large means that those people who are important within the society will often be different from those who are important outside. In the city-state of New Calabar, the prototype of the great *Ekine* member is *Jiji*, a famous character of olden times of whom it is said that, when he got too old to dance on his own feet, he had himself carried around the dancing arena, fully clothed, on the back of a young man. *Jiji* is described as an aristocrat of long pedigree, but not as a chief or as a man of any

¹ The largest of the three offshoots of the New Calabar city-state.

political importance. He is depicted as carefree, always engaged in sexual adventures; living for laughs, drinks, and above all for the masquerade. Though his character has probably been exaggerated through the years, prominent *Ekine* members of today do not entirely belie his image.

It is quite usual to find that the principal offices of *Ekine* are held neither by the head of the town or village, nor by anyone else prominent in its government or its politics. Indeed, they are often held by people who are 'cool', who 'like to laugh and play', and who do not 'look for cases'—by people, that is, who are in many ways the antithesis of the aggressive, thrusting politician. The same is often true of the core of dancing enthusiasts who give the society its real vitality.

But this does not mean that no one who is prominent in the village at large plays a significant part in *Ekine* activities. On the contrary: in Kalabari judgement, every grown man ought to be able to perform some masquerade of his choice with reasonable skill and enjoyment. And someone who is neither interested nor able is likely to be distrusted. In the olden days, indeed, he might well have been suspected of sorcery. There is a certain logic in this distrust; for a person who is unable to stand back from life and portray it in the masquerade may well be so totally committed to the struggle to be one up on his fellows as to pursue it by forbidden means—perhaps even by using lethal medicine. Hence every man who aspires to some standing in the community must cultivate his taste for the masquerade in order to make himself a completely acceptable person. (One hears here an echo of the English cultivation of a sense of humour, and the distrust of its absence. Is it just my imagination, or do the more ruthless circles of our society—like Big Business or academics—lay greater emphasis on this accomplishment than anyone else?)

3. *Religion as the Servant of Art*

At this stage of the analysis, one might still ask the question: Why, if the masquerade is first and foremost an art, and a highly developed one at that, should it have remained so closely associated with religion?

Here, I think, one should pause to ask the further question: What exactly is involved in our reacting to some human performance as a work of art? Briefly, two main factors seem to be involved. First of all, we must be able to cut off our practical, workaday reaction to the subject-matter of the performance, and exchange this reaction for an attitude of contemplation. To take the crude but effective example of a film about sex and violence, we must be able to suspend the workaday reactions of excitement or disgust which the subject-matter would normally inspire in us, and look at it with an eye which is engaged yet somehow aloof. If we cannot achieve this, we are unable to approach the film as a work of art. And if nobody can, we may well say that the film is not art at all, but mere pornography.

A second vital condition is that in approaching the performance, we should be able to suspend our personal reactions toward the actor, and concentrate upon the part he plays. In so far as we respond to the actor as the individual we know in the world outside, we have not succeeded in treating his performance as art. Most Englishmen encounter this sort of failure as children, watching school plays in which they know all the actors intimately. On such occasions their personal reactions to

the performers sometimes interfere so much that they are unable to appreciate the play.¹

In modern Western theatre and ballet, these vital requirements can usually be met without too much difficulty. In the first place the complexity of modern industrial society ensures that the theme of any play or ballet is often such that the majority of the audience have had no first-hand experience of any situation exactly similar. Hence the problem of cutting off workaday reactions to the theme of the performance is not acute. Secondly, the actors in modern theatre or ballet are not personally known to the majority of their audience. Hence the problem of suspending all personal reactions to them does not arise.

In the type of small-scale, homogeneous society exemplified by a Kalabari town or village, the problem of meeting these requirements is much more serious. In the first place, the greater uniformity of social experience means that the audience will have had first-hand exposure to the subject-matter of almost any dramatic performance. In their case, the subject-matter is always near the bone. Secondly, the performers are always personally known to most of their audience; so the latter are confronted with all the difficulties which face the spectator of the school play.

Now it is in this situation that the religious context of the masquerade would seem to have been crucial to its growth and survival as an art. First of all, by developing the themes of the masquerade around the figures of water spirits, Kalabari have been able to disentangle them from particular human beings whom everyone knows. Thus the figure of the water sorcerer disentangles the act of sorcery from its association with particular people whom everybody has to deal with. And the quarrel between the water-spirit husband and his father-in-law disentangles the strains of marriage from their association with the quarrelsome in-laws who provide the community with some of its current social problems. In this way the water spirits lift the subject-matter of the masquerade out of those contexts in which it evokes regular practical reactions. As gods, of course, one might expect them to evoke the practical reactions appropriate to beings whose help is crucial in the control of the everyday world. But precisely because they are gods who have very little practical importance, they do not evoke any such reactions. As for the animal figures which crop up from time to time amongst the water-spirit protagonists of the masquerade plays, their function seems much the same. Thus, on the one hand, they disentangle the themes of the plays from the human contexts in which they evoke practical reactions; and on the other hand, as creatures who occupy a rather marginal position in the field of human endeavour, they elicit no strong practical reactions on their own account. So it is that the water

¹ This line of approach is derived from ideas put forward in Edward Bullough's famous essay '“Psychical Distance” as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle', *British Journal of Psychology*, 1912, vol. v, no. 2), and from the application of these ideas to Greek religion made by Jane Harrison in her *Ancient Art and Ritual* (Oxford, 1948). This little book seems neglected by anthropologists, probably because it champions the discredited myth-from-ritual theory of religion. But the use which it makes of the concept of 'Psychical Distance', chiefly to account for the origins of Greek dramatic art, is independent of this mistaken theory and so merits

attention for its own sake. The ancient Greek situation as analysed by Harrison seems analogous to the one we are dealing with here. Thus she sees Greek drama arising as an art in religious rites representing the ancient heroes: because these figures were losing their religious importance at the time, they could elicit contemplation rather than practical reaction. A point of contrast, of course, is that the Kalabari dancing water spirits are not part of a decaying religious system: on the contrary, they are part of a very live system, of which, however, they happen to be marginal members.

spirits, and to a lesser extent various animals, make it possible for the masquerade to satisfy the first of our two conditions.

Now, too, one can understand an otherwise curious inconsistency in the way Kalabari talk and think about their masquerades. Particular plays, as we have seen, are treated as portraying attributes of their water spirit 'owners' or episodes in their lives. To take one example, the character of the grunting, suspicious native doctor portrayed in the *Ngbula* play is that of the water spirit *Ngbula* himself; and the ugliness of the sculpted mask which crowns the dancer's head is also the ugliness of *Ngbula* himself. Yet the origin myths of the masquerades, which you may recall from the beginning of this paper, imply something rather different. For by presenting the masquerades first and foremost as plays, originally performed by the water spirits and then taken over by men, they imply that the content no more portrays the characters of the original spirit players than it portrays those of the present-day human players. This inconsistency, I think, is a response to the inherent paradox of the masquerade performance itself. Thus the masquerade hangs its themes on the figures of gods who form part of Kalabari reality; but it is by making the claim to be representing this particular area of reality that it helps its audience to treat its content not as part of real life but as art or 'play'. By saying in one breath that the masquerades portray water spirits, and in another that they are merely plays once performed by water spirits, Kalabari leave the two terms of the paradox unreconciled. But if they were reconciled, the masquerade might lose its impact as an art.

As we have seen, the second of our two conditions poses an equally serious problem in the Kalabari community. And here again, the religious context of the masquerade seems crucial. Thus, because their actors are enveloped in water-spirit disguise, Kalabari are able to get round the problem posed by the audience's personal acquaintance with the performers: for the disguise makes it relatively easy to suspend one's reactions to the player and transfer them to the play.

It is now that many of the prohibitions which the *Ekinge* society imposes on women begin to make sense. Anthropologists have often treated West African masquerades as a male device for dominating women. By making women think that they are spirits, so the story goes, the masqueraders are able to impose their will and inflict punishment on a hapless weaker sex. However far this may be true in other areas,¹ it is certainly far from the case here. First of all, it is apparent that women are not in any way victims of these performances. Far from it, indeed. For women are the principal spectators of the masquerade; and one of the implicit principles of the latter's performance is that spectators must never be injured or seriously chased. It is those men who actively participate in the performance, either as maskers or as an attendant *corps de ballet*, who run the risk of injury during one of the more violent plays.

Nor is it true that the real nature of the masquerade is intentionally kept secret from women, in order that they should feel terror for objects they suppose to be spirits. Both men and women know the myths of origin of the masquerade plays, and no one tries to keep them a secret reserved for men. Women, moreover, are allowed to see the disembodied headpieces of masquerades when these have been painted or sewn, and are set up in their shrines on the eve of a performance; and on such

¹ That it is not true among the Yoruba is suggested by Ulli Beier's article 'Gelede Masks', *Odé*, no. 6, June 1958; and for the Northern Ibo the same thing is suggested by J. S. Boston, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

occasions they even queue up with men to make small personal offerings of coins to the water spirits involved. Yet again, the masquerade costume does not entirely conceal the human player beneath, since it leaves the feet quite naked for any woman to see. And, when a novice fails the shrine-pointing test which we mentioned earlier, it is considered quite appropriate to demask him in front of all the women in the community.

Women, then, are not forbidden the knowledge that masquerade dancers are human. What they are forbidden is to see, hear of, or suggest any connexion between a masquerade and a particular player. Thus they must not see men in the process of putting on their masquerade costumes. They must not greet any masquerade by the name of its performer; nor must any man so greet a masquerade in their presence. They must not talk of any man as the performer of a particular masquerade; nor must they hear such talk from men. They must not abuse an *Ekinge* member with the words: 'You animal'; for animals, too, are among the protagonists of the masquerade plays.

The common feature of these various prohibitions is that, by concealing the identity of the individual player, they damp down the tendency to react personally to him rather than aesthetically to the play. In this, they serve to uphold the vital part played by the masquerade costume. The inconsistency offered by the demasking of the incompetent novice is more apparent than real: for while it is appropriate that during a properly conducted masquerade all reactions should be diverted from player to play, it is equally appropriate that any gross failure should be held against the player and not against the play.

It is because they are ordained, not as victims of the masquerade, but as its eternal spectators, that women are singled out by these prohibitions. For men, all of whom are potentially involved in its performance or behind-the-scenes organization, such prohibitions would defeat their own ends. For men, it is the code of behaviour enjoined within *Ekinge* that concentrates their attention on the play rather than the player.

In summing up the relation of religion to art in the Kalabari masquerade, it is important to avoid giving the impression that the one has been deliberately pressed into the service of the other. What does seem true is that religion has provided a prop without which the masquerade could never have grown into the major art that it is.

VALUES REALIZED INCIDENTALLY THROUGH *EKINGE*

Because the masquerade is not a restricted, specialist skill for whose performance the rest of the community pays, but an accomplishment which every normal man is expected to cultivate as part of his equipment for living, the values of *Ekinge* can never be perfectly segregated from those which hold sway beyond its confines. On the contrary, as we shall see in what follows, the influence of these other values seeps insidiously into many aspects of *Ekinge* activity.

1. *The Masquerade, the Individual, and the Lineage*

It is common for the enthusiastic *Ekinge* member to specialize in the performance of a particular play, and to practise this play with especial fervour. The play chosen may be one already established in the village. More rarely, it may be one that the

would-be performer has brought in from another community after making the customary payment to the latter's *Ekinge* members. Just very occasionally, it seems, the play may be one which the individual introduces after some sort of visionary guidance from the water spirits.

Now although the conjunction of a particular masquerade with a particular dancer must not be formally acknowledged or revealed in front of women, the latter as well as their menfolk do come to possess a good deal of tacit knowledge about the specialist performers of various plays. In their approval of the performance, reaction to the player often creeps in alongside reaction to the play. Approval is expressed by throwing coins to the masker which are collected by his escorts; and *Ekinge* members admit that the women, who are most vigorous in this, often know whom they are throwing to. They say that such gifts are frequently tokens of willingness to start a love affair as well as of appreciation of the performance. The masquerade, then, plays an important part in male rivalry for women.

The performance of the masquerade in which he specializes may also provide an individual with the opportunity to indulge in the conspicuous display and expenditure of wealth which are an integral part of Kalabari status-rivalry. This applies especially where the play concerned is one of the 'dressing-up' masquerades which demands a certain luxuriance of costume. In such a play there is much that a man can do to emphasize his own prosperity by the incorporation of costly old cloths and trinkets. These potlatch elements are most pronounced in the New Calabar city-state, where a House head who introduces a new masquerade may lay on an enormous wake-feast for his fellow *Ekinge* members, provide the women of his House with costly cloths for their parade round the dancing arena to sing the praises of the water spirit 'owner' of the play, and dress the costume itself with corals, silks, and gold braids.

Over and above these various ways in which the masquerade can be used to enhance individual status, there is something which is perhaps of even deeper significance. The organization of Kalabari society provides few alternative avenues for gaining status. A person becomes somebody of account by developing a generalized influence over others—first of all in limited contexts like that of his age-set and his lineage, then later in the community at large. Because this is the one major way of achieving status, judgements of a person's worth tend to be of an absolute and uncompromising type. Either he is 'a man', or he is not. In this taxing situation, the particular masquerade which a person has chosen to adopt assumes a specially weighty significance. Skill in its performance is not just something which compensates to some extent for lack of political influence in the community—though it may do so. It is something much more. For the various masquerades played by any *Ekinge* society are by and large incommensurable with one another: they are just different. Hence, by deciding to specialize in a particular masquerade, a man both makes a free choice and at the same time involves himself in an activity which is not fully comparable with the activities of others. This element of non-comparability looms very large where, in other things, the individual's sense of worth is almost totally vulnerable to a relentless measure based on his influence or lack of it. In such circumstances, the adoption of a special masquerade becomes almost a guarantee of the individual's sense of secure identity.

Only in this context, I think, can one understand the great feeling with which men reminisce among themselves about the plays in which they have chosen to specialize. Only now, too, can one understand why, in many villages, one of the most important and deeply felt parts of a man's funeral rites is when *Ekine* members, at the request of his relatives, stage his special play.¹ So closely is the masquerade associated with the sense of individual identity that in the city-state of New Calabar, where large and elaborate ancestor memorials are made to represent dead House heads, it is the miniature replica of the headpiece of a man's special play that is used to differentiate his memorial figure from those of others. The human-body motif in all such figures is a completely standardized one which shows no attempt at portraiture; and the headpiece replica which surmounts it is the one portion which conveys the reference to an individual.

Where a man has purchased a play from another community, where he has produced something entirely new as a result of visionary inspiration, or where he has merely become the outstanding dancer of a mask in an established play, his heirs² acquire an exclusive right to provide the dancers for future performances—though of course only those who are *Ekine* members can make use of the right. This seems to be the reason for the great variation in dancing rights which one finds associated with the plays of any particular *Ekine* society. Thus, where a whole play has been purchased by an individual from elsewhere, rights to perform all its masks pass to the purchaser's heirs. On the other hand, where a man has been an outstanding dancer of one mask in a play consisting of several, rights in this particular mask become the property of his heirs, while rights in the other masks of the play remain communal. Hence we find a continuum ranging from plays whose dancing rights are wholly vested in a particular lineage group, through plays with some rights restricted and some communal, to plays in which all the rights are communal.

In the performance of these restricted masquerades, there is an important element of reverence for the dead. Where there are permanent sculpted headpieces for them, these are kept in the ancestor shrines of the lineage groups who have a right to provide their dancers. And in the preliminary offerings and invocations which take place on the eve of a performance, prayers addressed to the ancestor first associated with the play mingle with those addressed to its water spirit 'owner'. These prayers ask the ancestor to help make the plays a success, and they remind him that 'Your child is taking out your play today, so that your name shall not disappear.' In other words, a man's special masquerade is not only a symbol of his individuality in this life: it is also a means toward his posthumous survival in the community that gave him birth. Since Kalabari think of the after life in terms of continuing relations between the dead and the living, this is something of importance to everyone.³

¹ Since it is performed out of its turn in the masquerade cycle, the funeral play is not accompanied by the usual preliminary invocations and offerings.

² For the descent-system of Kalabari, see the outline at the beginning of my 'Kalabari World-View', *Africa*, July 1962. Suffice it to remember here that where the deceased's wife or wives were married with small bridewealth, property rights pass matrilineally—first to his full-brothers and thence to his

full-sisters' sons. Where there was a large-bride-wealth marriage, property rights pass to the deceased's own male children.

³ This aspect of the Kalabari masquerade shows interesting parallels with the Yoruba *Egungun* masquerade as described by P. Morton-Williams in 'Yoruba Responses to the Fear of Death', *Africa*, Jan. 1960. *Egungun*, however, is first and foremost symbolic of the dead, whereas the Kalabari masquerade is only incidentally so.

In so far as the performance of a restricted masquerade is an act of reverence for a dead man on the part of his descendants, it is also an assertion by them of the collective status which they derive from him. As such, it is apt to include the sort of potlatch elements which sometimes characterize the special plays of individuals. Here again, such elements are most marked in the trading state of New Calabar, especially when a House brings out the play introduced by its founder. The dresses of the House women parading to sing the praises of the water spirit 'owner', the lavish food and drink distributed to *Ekine* members during the wake, and the finery of the maskers themselves—all these assert the prowess of the House in a powerfully conspicuous display of wealth and generosity.

In its association with the status of individual and lineage, we see the masquerade being used to realize values basically opposed to those which are implied by the formal doctrines, rules, and organization of *Ekine*. Thus, while all the rules of *Ekine* are directed toward ensuring that people react to the play and not to the player, the dancer himself, without actually violating any of these rules, is able to slip between them in various ways so as to use the masquerade for the enhancement of his individuality. The result is the curious paradox of the masquerade headpiece, which for *Ekine* is a means of effacing individual identity, but whose miniature replica on a memorial figure actually symbolizes such identity. Again, while the rules of *Ekine* exclude from its confines both the dead and the lineage ideology which they sanction, a lineage group which has an exclusive right to provide the dancers for a masquerade can slip between these rules in such a way as to make the play serve as both a remembrance of its founding ancestor and an assertion of its collective prowess. Here too the result is a spectacular paradox—that of ancestral libations, forbidden within the *Ekine* meeting-house, but poured elsewhere to ensure the success of the very masquerades which *Ekine* exists to promote.

In the masquerade, then, the aesthetic values promoted by *Ekine* are constantly struggling with other values which dominate the social world beyond its confines. But this should not surprise us. For although at the core of *Ekine* membership there is often a group of dedicated artists who, in a conflict situation, would support the values of the society against those of the outside world, there is a larger proportion of ordinary people who would make the opposite choice.

2. *Ekine as an Organ of Government*

According to Talbot, the first serious ethnographer of this area, 'Among Kalabari and Okrikans, before the coming of the white men, the power of government was mostly vested in the Sakapu club, just as in the Ekpe society among the Efik of Calabar and the Ngbe of the Ekoi.'¹ This picture of *Ekine* as an all-powerful secret society was perpetuated by Newns in his later administrative report on the area.² Newns depicted the authority of the New Calabar House heads as a recent development from a traditional pattern in which most significant communal authority was vested in *Ekine*. Kalabari informants, too, often answer vague general questions about *Ekine* by saying 'It was our old-time government'.

¹ *Tribes of the Niger Delta*, London, 1932, p. 300.
See also the author's *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*,
vol. iii (Oxford, 1926), p. 765.

² Intelligence Report on the Kalabari Clan,
Nigeria, 1942.

This picture of *Ekine* as the principal organ of government contrasts oddly with what we have described so far; and, in fact, it credits the institution with an undue political importance. How this appraisal of it arose is rather a mystery. Part of the explanation, perhaps, is that Talbot automatically assumed *Ekine* to have the same functions as the Cross River political associations which he knew so well. Another part may be that Newns was dealing with the New Calabar House heads at a time when they were causing the Administration a lot of trouble: in his anxiety to find some more viable basis for local government, it is possible that he unwittingly magnified the political significance of non-chiefly institutions. Present-day Kalabari generalizations about *Ekine* and 'government' may be in part due to the digestion of Talbot and Newns. In part, too, they may stem from the peculiar associations of the word 'government' for some of the less educated informants—associations often centred upon violent, high-handed action by the police: for, as we shall see in a moment, there were certain restricted situations in which action of this type was frequently taken by *Ekine*.

Be all this as it may, when we turn from vague general statements about *Ekine* to direct observation and to recollections of older men about actions of the society in specific contexts, we get a rather different picture. First of all, any public delict or offence against village laws is a 'town case' which is dealt with by the village assembly and never by *Ekine*. Examples of such offences are murder, sorcery, or canoe-theft. In any matter of communal policy-making, whether it has to do with fending off attacks from a neighbouring group or with deciding how and where to dig a village well, it is the village assembly and not *Ekine* which both deliberates and executes decisions. Where the village has a system of 'Watchmen' to act as guardians of law and order, these are appointed in rotation by the assembly and not by *Ekine*.

Where, then, is the 'governmental' significance of *Ekine*? Principally, this seems to be in the sphere of arbitrating private delicts—cases where one individual or group is considered to have wronged another without infringing village laws, such as those involving debt, defamation, or adultery. In such cases, the person who fancies himself wronged complains to *Ekine*, which then summons the accused and assembles for a hearing of both sides. Heavy fines are often imposed as penalties or compensations, and *Iwo Sekiapu* (the junior grade) is sent forcibly to distrain goods of equivalent value if the accused fails to pay. There is no appeal.

In New Calabar, accounts of nineteenth-century politics suggest that these formal judicial processes were, in the past, often made the cover for intrigues which gave the society an added dimension of political significance. According to such accounts, powerful figures within *Ekine* were wont to gang up on rivals, incite people to complain against them to the society, and then get them saddled with crippling fines. If they could not pay the fines, they were forced to part with their slaves in lieu, and so might be politically ruined.

Restricted though its governmental functions are to the sphere of private delict, *Ekine* is still undeniably important as part of Kalabari political organization. Yet in trying to define the institution in Kalabari terms, I think it would be a mistake to regard its political functions as more than incidental. For one thing, where we find an origin myth for some Kalabari communal institution, this generally states not only how the institution came to be founded by one of the heroes, but also what

purposes it was founded for. But in the case of *Ekine*, the myth of its foundation by *Ekineba* makes no mention whatsoever of its judicial functions. Again, though *Ekineba* is the patron hero of the institution, she is never invoked or in any other way involved during its judicial operations. Finally, as we have already seen, status-differentiation within *Ekine* is in terms of skill and experience in the masquerade, and not of age, political influence, forensic skill, or any other criterion immediately relevant to its judicial aspect.

Perhaps one can sum up as follows. Kalabari villagers are wont to call on a great variety of individuals and groups as arbitrators of private delict. Choice in this is very flexible, and *Ekine* offers just one possibility among many. If it is especially favoured in such cases, this is because it contains all the important adult males in the community, and even if such people do not participate in a particular case, their support of the institution lends weight to its proceedings and prevents them from being challenged. Thus, if a person who fancies himself wronged calls in *Ekine* to judge his case, the person whom he accuses cannot object as he can to other groups that might have been called in. If he refuses to turn up to the hearing, this just increases the presumption of his guilt. Again, *Ekine* has such influence behind it that no one will challenge its use of force to collect the fines it imposes. In addition to all this, the ideals of the institution forbid its members to bring into it the struggles for status and influence which rage in the village outside; so, as an arbitrating group, it has all the formal trappings of impartiality. And where the successful resolution of many disputes lies in persuading people that they can climb down from extreme positions without loss of face, such an appearance of impartiality may be crucial—whatever the reality behind it.

In short, the values, organization, and membership of *Ekine* make it incidentally suited to certain judicial functions. But these functions are not among the essential purposes of the institution. Despite earlier accounts presenting *Ekine* as a primarily political association, none of the evidence we have reviewed controverts the judgement that, for Kalabari, *Ekine* is essentially a society dedicated to the production of an art.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have dealt with an institution which is associated with a bewildering variety of diverse and often conflicting values. In trying to explain its meaning for Kalabari, I have distinguished essential values and incidental values. The essential values are those which the myths of origin say that *Ekine* was founded to promote. They are the values to which the formal rules and prohibitions of the institution relate. And they are the values taken into account in assigning status within it. As we have seen, these essential values can only be called aesthetic.

By contrast, the incidental values are those which find no mention in the formal doctrines, rules and status-criteria of the institution. At several points they are actually in conflict with the essential values. In a sense, attempts to realize them through *Ekine* are an 'abuse' of the institution.

I stress this rather banal distinction between essential and incidental, uses and abuses, because social anthropologists often ignore it to the detriment of their ethnography. Often it is the incidental values and abuses of an institution which seem

most relevant to that mysterious thing—a purely ‘social-structural’ analysis. Where this is so, the tendency is to lay all the emphasis on the incidentals, play down the essentials, and end up with the picture of a society whose members are preoccupied with a constant, nightmarish struggle to be one up on the Joneses or to fit in with the Smiths, Browns, and Greens. Applied to *Ekine*, this sort of analysis would have concentrated almost entirely upon the judicial functions of the institution, and upon the masquerade as a means of individual and group status-assertion. The result would have been like an analysis of the art of Picasso which concluded that the main significance of his paintings was as means whereby millionaires could assert their financial capacity.

As an art, the Kalabari masquerade raises a number of points which seem relevant to the wider study of West African art generally. I should like to bring up two of these points before closing.

First of all, the masquerade belies the easy and oft-heard generalization that in traditional West African culture there was no such thing as Art for Art’s sake. For although its performance is intimately associated with religious activity and belief, here it is the religion that serves the art, rather than vice versa. It is possible that some studies of West African culture have not found art practised for its own sake, simply because they have not looked for it in the right direction.

This brings us to the second point. In describing the masquerade performance, I took pains to stress that its central element was the dance, and that the apparatus of costume and headpiece filled a subordinate place in the whole. I also stressed that the sculpted mask was first and foremost an instrument for securing the presence of a spirit, and not something produced as a work of art. This in fact is true of Kalabari sculpture generally. Now it would be dangerous to generalize on the basis of this one example. But taken together with reports on some other West African cultures such as that of the Ibo,¹ it does make one suspect that, at least in certain areas of West Africa, the dance overshadows sculpture, painting, architecture, and literature as the leading traditional art.

Now, so far, the study of West African art has been carried on almost entirely by Europeans. And I think it is probably fair to say that in pursuing it, we have been strongly influenced by our own ranking of the various arts. For us, painting, sculpture, and literature rank far ahead of the ballet. To call someone a connoisseur of painting or sculpture is for us high praise; but for the enthusiast of ballet, we have only the term ‘balletomane’, which implies a warped sense of values. When we come to study West African art, there is a tendency to bring these attitudes along with us. We make a bee-line for the sculpture and eulogize its aesthetic merits; but we consign the dance to the category of mere ritual, not to be taken seriously as art. Even when we find that people do not appear to treat their sculpture as an art at all, we often try to defend our preconceptions against the evidence of our senses by saying that this apparent lack of appreciation conceals a great depth of aesthetic feeling which for some strange reason is never expressed in words.

This preconceived ranking of the arts expresses itself not only in academic studies of West African culture, but also in practical policies. Take the example of Nigeria,

¹ See the comment by K. C. Murray on pp. 95–100 of *The Artist in Tribal Society*, ed. M. W. Smith, London, 1961.

the country to which Kalabari now belong. In the last two decades, Nigeria has been flooded with teachers of painting, sculpture, and literature, to the virtual exclusion of ballet instructors and choreographers. As a result, modern Nigerian art is dominated by painters, sculptors, and writers. For all their talent, however, they still largely lack a critical audience among their own countrymen. As a result, while they strive to develop an authentically African style, it is hard for them to work without one eye cocked on a largely European public. This leads to deep conflicts in their work, and has probably obscured their true potential.¹ Meanwhile the dance, for which there already exists a large and critical Nigerian audience, has been allowed to stagnate. In short, it is just that art whose further development might have yielded the biggest returns, which has been most neglected in modern Nigeria.

In this and other newly independent West African countries, the younger generation of artists and intellectuals is much preoccupied with the development of a modern culture which still has its roots in tradition. Such a development, it would seem, must involve not only coming to terms with tradition within each particular branch of the arts, but also examining the order of priority which is assigned to the various branches. For in Nigeria and other West African countries today, the current order of priority seems to owe more to European than to indigenous tradition.

¹ A good discussion of the modern Nigerian painters and sculptors is to be found in *Art in Nigeria 1960*, by U. Beier, Cambridge, 1960.

Résumé

LA SOCIÉTÉ DES *EKINE* CHEZ LES KALABARI

UN des piliers de la culture traditionnelle Kalabari est la société des *Ekine*, connue aussi sous le nom de *Sekiapu*, 'les gens qui dansent'. Ce groupe constitue à la fois une institution religieuse, une forme d'art et une distraction; il a souvent été décrit comme un organisme jouant un rôle important dans le gouvernement. L'objet de cet article n'est pas seulement de démêler les différents aspects de cette société mais aussi de faire une distinction entre ce qui est essentiel et ce qui est accidentel.

Chaque communauté Kalabari possède sa propre société des *Ekine*, indépendante de celle des autres communautés. Chaque *Ekine* doit participer à un cycle de 30 à 40 mascarades. Chaque mascarade est associée à un ou plusieurs esprits de l'eau. L'aspect religieux comporte des invocations rituelles habituelles, des offrandes et des demandes en vue d'obtenir des bienfaits. Des demandes sont aussi faites pour la réussite de la mascarade. Les 'propriétaires' des mascarades sont souvent des esprits résidant loin de l'espace occupé par la communauté, peu importants ou dangereux. Les thèmes des mascarades sont divers: peinture des aspects de la vie des Kalabari ou de faits qui sont habituellement cachés; elles ne sont jamais très fignées. On laisse au langage des tambours et de la danse le soin d'apporter les compléments qui enrichissent les mascarades et les rendent satisfaisantes. Néanmoins, le rôle des costumes et des masques est de manifester la présence de l'esprit de l'eau, de façon à impressionner les spectateurs. Les titres des *Ekine* sont différents de ceux qui prévalent en dehors de la société et il est important de noter que les critères pour obtenir les différents grades et offices sont tous en rapport avec l'art. Ainsi, l'invocation des ancêtres est interdite depuis qu'il n'y a plus de compétition au sujet de la position et de l'influence du lignage et de la parenté.

Les gens importants parmi les *Ekine* ne sont souvent pas les mêmes que ceux de la communauté. Ils sont à l'opposé du politicien agressif et cassant. Les femmes sont les spectatrices et non pas les victimes des mascarades. Les valeurs et l'organisation de la société des *Ekine* la rendent parfois apte à certaines fonctions juridiques telles que l'arbitrage des délits privés; mais ces fonctions ne constituent pas les buts essentiels de cette institution.

Malgré les récents témoignages qui présentent cette société comme une association surtout politique, rien ne vient contester le fait que, pour les Kalabari, l'*Ekine* est essentiellement une société consacrée à la production d'un art.

NOTES

IMMIGRANTS AND ASSOCIATIONS: THE IBO IN TWENTIETH CENTURY CALABAR

The scholarly interest in emerging nations in the post-World War II period had its anthropological and sociological focus on the development of cities in these areas. Nationalism seems to be connected with industrialization and with urbanization. In West Africa much of the attention spent on study of developing cities has concentrated on the importance in such situations of the voluntary organization. It seems quite clear now that voluntary organizations are one of the most often used and most effective techniques for softening the shock of transplantation from the certainties of tribal life into the uncertainties of city life. The formation of voluntary organizations in cities is not restricted to Africa, however. In Central and South America, in Southeast Asia, and in India the voluntary organization has grown and developed and been studied. Most attempts to compare voluntary organizations in these places seem to have assumed that they were a natural or inevitable result of a process called "urbanization". It does not seem to me to be necessary to compare these social phenomena in the context of such a process. We should compare voluntary organizations in different times and places and under different circumstances in order to enhance our understanding of more general social and cultural processes. This paper attempts two things: the delineation of the history of the formation of voluntary organization of one immigrant group in one West African city; and a comparison between the voluntary organizations of this group and of some other groups. It is hoped that the former will contribute to the body of knowledge we have about voluntary organizations, and that the latter will suggest hypotheses about social and cultural processes in general. It is not sufficient to describe the voluntary organizations of the Ibo in Calabar. It is necessary to trace the history of the town itself; to compare the reaction of the Ibo to the urban environment with that of the Efik, the indigenous inhabitants of the town; and to show in what ways the culture of the Ibo and the Efik predispose them to react in the ways they do.

THE IBO
TRADITIONAL CULTURES

The Ibo

The Ibo currently number about 5.5 million people.¹ While there is little strong evidence about the population of the tribe before 1952, we do know that the Ibo suffered enormously from the Slave Trade in the 18th Century, and we can infer that the population must have been very large for a very long time in order to support the depredations of slavers. The area covered by the Ibo includes three of the five provinces of Eastern Nigeria, and portions of two other Eastern provinces and one Western province. The exact geographic extent of Iboland has not been measured, but is in the order of 25,000 square miles. The greatest north-south dimension (the critical dimension for climate and topography) is about 200 miles. Iboland spreads over at least three clearly distinct climatological and topographic zones: low marshy areas of rainfall in excess of 100 inches per year; flat lands with 60 or so inches of rain a year; and undulating partly forested country of less total rainfall, and a longer dry season. This geographic variation introduces differences in ecological adjustment of Ibo communities, yet there are certain pan-Ibo similarities in economy which deserve mention.

Everywhere the Ibo is a farmer. In the south he may also fish, and in the north he may have a larger number of animals, but everywhere he tills land. The staple crops are yams and palm oil, and everywhere they provide the backbone of the diet. Yams are grown in gardens cleared for forest areas by slash-and-burn techniques. Palm trees may be individually owned, or owned by a kinship group. In the cultivation of yams the men clear the land and may help weed or harvest, but the majority of the work done with the yams is the responsibility of the women. Where animals are kept, they are the responsibility of the men. Ibo land is poor land, and the population density is very high in some places. While Ibo subsistence level varies widely it is nowhere very high. The central economic institution in Ibo culture is the village market. In areas of very high population density, there may be one market for two or three villages, but the typical pattern is for each village to have its own market. These markets serve more than an economic function, however. They also have the social functions of integrating the village in economic affairs, of providing an arena of individual enterprise beyond the confines of land holdings and gardening success, and of being an institution around which many other social functions cluster themselves. For example the age classes of young men have the responsibility of clearing paths to the market and seeing that the grounds themselves are kept neat and orderly. Women's organizations take as their responsibility the control of prices, quality, and trading practices in the market.

¹ Population Census of Eastern Nigeria; Registrar; Census Office, Enugu. 1954.

Women not only are the responsible persons in gardening, they also dominate the marketing of produce and handicrafts. An Ibo woman is a highly independent economic being with her own capital, control over her own transactions, and is responsible to no one in her enterprise. A woman is supposed to provide for her own children with little or no help from the husband, and few Ibo husbands take a direct interest in the methods used by their wives in providing the necessities of the home. The husband is responsible for providing sufficient cash so that his wife can provide for him as an individual, but his responsibility does not extend beyond this. Both intra- and inter-village trade exist. It is in the latter that men place their role in the market. Various Ibo areas have economic specialities: regional produce, carved wood products, ironware, pottery, game, etc. These goods are traded between villages largely by men—at least it was so before extensive European contact.

The important thing about the village market is that it is a *village* market. Its affairs are only vaguely coordinated with other markets, and it provides not only economic self-sufficiency for the village, but also an institution around which the loyalty of the people to their village can cluster. The market is the economic definition of the village.

The autonomy of the village in the economic sphere is matched by its political autonomy. There are some areas of Iboland where there are "chiefs" whose hegemony extends over larger areas than the village. Most of these areas are on the west side of the Niger in some proximity to Benin. It is likely that such centralization of political power is an outgrowth of the political dominance of Benin during the centuries immediately preceding European contact. For most of Iboland no man has power outside his own village, and each village is jealous of its own integrity. The anthropologist with most intimate and extensive knowledge of the Ibo characterizes Ibo political organization as being made up of "autonomous villages".² Another anthropologist, studying in a different area 15 years earlier characterized the village as "a politically independent community".³ In former times warfare was between villages, with only rare cases of alliance between villages against another, and even then such alliances were only *ad hoc* and reflected no supra-village political organization.

Within the village, the political structure may take one of several forms. Sometimes the political structure is superimposed on the kinship structure and the leaders of kinship groups are the decision makers in the political sphere. In other cases there is a clear correlation between economic strength and political power. Occasionally legislative, executive, and judicial powers

² Ottenberg, S., "Ibo Receptivity to Change", in Bascom, W. L. and Herskovits, M. J. *Continuity and Change in African Cultures* (Chicago, 1959).

³ Harris, J., "The Position of Women in a Nigerian Society", *Transactions of the New York Academy of Science*, Series II, vol. 2. #5, 1940.

all reside in the secret societies and the holders of titles in the societies. In most cases the political power resides in the hands of those willing and able to seize it and to exercise it. The Ibo everywhere have a concept of the *oranya* or "big man". Elsewhere I have termed such persons "natural leaders" and assigned to them the quality which the Ibo speaking English is wont to call "pushful";

"This is the quality of being in the right place and the right time, and of recognizing and seizing opportunity. To be pushful is to be self-confident, energetic, and aggressive. The pushful man does not ride rough-shod over others, but in situations which call for decision and leadership he steps in and takes over."⁴

Not only does the possession of the appropriate personal characteristics and their exercise lead to political power, but there is no structural limitation on such leadership within the village. The political autonomy of the village, and the characteristics of the distribution of political power are matched in the sphere of social organization by the lack of supra-village social organization and the predominance of achieved social prestige.

Since the village is the largest economic unit, and an autonomous political unit, it is not surprising that there are no social bonds uniting villages. In those areas where the Ibo developed rudimentary centralized political systems with paramount chiefs, several villages may have been united under the hegemony of one man and presumably in such a situation, the man's home village achieved considerable stature relative to other villages. However, this situation was atypical of Ibo culture, and even in this situation there is no reason to believe that certain social institutions cut across village lines. In some areas the Ibo have age classes, but the members of a given age class in a village feel no alliance with members of the corresponding age class in another village. Unlike some other West African cultures, the Ibo do not have title societies which are common to a large number of villages. A man may be honored for having taken titles in his home village, but his membership in a title society is not transferable to another locality. The frequent use of the prefix *umu* ("children of") in the name of Ibo villages indicates a certain match between kinship structures and the village. Some villages draw their membership entirely from a single kindred, and no members of the kindred live elsewhere. In other villages other descent systems structure the village social organization in different ways. What seems to be uniform throughout Iboland is that no groups within a village have continuing and strong ties with groups in another village. The geographic unit matches the social unit.

The prestige of the individual villager comes through wealth, membership in title societies (if they exist in the village) and their position within the kinship structure. Where lineage or clan organizations exist, social position may be a function of geneology and/or age. It is my impression, however,

⁴ Morrill, W. T., *Two Urban Cultures of Calabar, Nigeria*; Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), University of Chicago, 1961.

that such ascribed status had to be validated by achievements in other spheres such as the accumulation of wives and children, the amassing of wealth, or the taking of titles. In short, ascription alone is an insufficient mechanism for high status—it has to be accompanied by achievement.

Three aspects of Ibo traditional culture must be kept in mind to understand the nature of Ibo adjustment to the environment of Calabar: the wide diversity in traits and institutions within the Ibo culture; the importance of the village as the largest unit of economic, political, and social organization; and the emphasis on achieved versus ascribed status in the career of individual Ibo.

The Efik

The Efik are one of the dialectical groups within the larger ethnic group called the Ibibio. Their separation from the rest of the Ibibio probably took place in the late 17th century.⁵ By the beginning of the 18th century the Efik were heavily involved in the Slave Trade, and their subsequent history has separated them further and further from the rest of the Ibibio. The size of the tribe now approximates 25,000.⁶ After the Efik split off from the rest of the Ibibio, they settled on one of two spots along the Cross River and villages grew up. Eventually they occupied seven villages on or near the river. During the early period of Efik tribal life, their political, economic and social organizations may have been much like that of the Ibo. The villages were probably independent economic units with inter-village trade in local specialities. The Efik certainly were gardeners of yams like the Ibo. The soils of the areas in which the Efik settled were better, probably because they were virgin soils not yet exhausted by intensive slash-and-burn agriculture. The crops grown were the same with palm oil and yams as the basic subsistence crops. However, the proximity of the river made it possible for the Efik to rely fairly heavily on fish as a major part of the diet. The relative fertility of the soil, and the easy availability of fish, prawns, etc. from the river has had an important effect on the history of the tribe. The Efik today attribute many of the personal characteristics in which they differ from other surrounding tribes to the "easy" life which they led after splitting off and founding their own villages.

The earliest records which we have of the Efik indicate certain characteristics of their political organization which differentiate them sharply from the Ibo. Early in their history the Efik developed great emphasis upon political power through ascription. The executive, legislative, and judicial power in the tribe resided in the secret societies, chief among them the Epko

⁵ Simmons, D., "An Ethnographic Sketch of the Efik People" in C. D. Forde, *Efik Traders of Old Calabar*, IAI, OUP. (London, 1956).

⁶ PCEN, 1954.

Society. This organization did contain as members all the adult members of the tribe, but it was ranked internally, and movement through the ranks seems to have been largely dependent on the payment of increasingly heavy fees. The payment of these fees depended in turn upon control over productive wealth, and this control was vested in individuals who headed patrilineal extended families. The Epko Society met periodically and also on an *ad hoc* basis. Decisions of the society were enforced by violent sanctions: arson, murder, whipping, destruction of property, or sorcery. Boycott was also used as a technique for bringing recalcitrants in line, but it succeeded largely through the threat of more violent measures. The membership of the society was known, of course, but when the society acted in public, its members were disguised to prevent individual identification. Since the Epko Society crossed village lines, political power among the Efik was tribal rather than village. The society also tied the villages together because of its importance as a symbol of tribal solidarity. A member of Epko from one village was welcome at the meetings of the society in other villages, provided he could establish his bonafides under examination by the leaders of the host group. The economic and political requirements which arose as the Efik became more and more involved in and dependent upon the Slave Trade further increased the centralization of power in the tribe. A political organization developed with the equivalent of a paramount chief, the *Obong*, elected by the heads of families from among their own number. The *Obong*, originally intended merely as a simple representative of the tribe in dealing with Europeans, rapidly developed into a political figure with considerable personal power and answerable to no one save the Epko Society, of which he was a leader.

The patrilineal extended family, the *ufok* ("house"), may have existed as a basic part of the social organization while the Efik still lived amid other Ibibio. However, after the Efik separated, the *ufok* increased in importance. By the late 18th century there were only eight or nine *ufok* in the entire tribe. Each of these was named and was headed by an *etubom*, the senior male in the family. The *ufok* was the land-holding unit, and the farm lands were under the direct control of the *etubom*. Death of an individual meant that the lands which he worked reverted to the *ufok* and were redistributed to the members of the *ufok*, or reassigned to the deceased's son or brother. The *ufok* was also a residential group, originally a single compound containing the houses of the *etubom*, his wives, brothers, and sons. Later the *ufok* came to be identified with a larger area, sometimes referred to as a "ward" or even "town". Sections of modern Calabar are recognized by name as the residence area of an *ufok*, all the residents of the "town" owing allegiance to the *etubom* who carries the family name. The *ufok* was also the slave-owning unit, and a corporation of slave dealers. Raiding and trading expeditions up the Cross River were mounted by an *ufok*, the money, manpower, and organization being

under the control of the etubom (the word apparently derives from *ete*, "father" and *ubom*, "canoe"). Slaves were either sent to "plantations" owned by the ufok as corporation property, or were sold by the ufok to Europeans, other Efik, or members of the ufok itself. The power and prestige of the ufok was measured in the extent of its lands under cultivation, the number of slaves it owned, and the weight of the word of etubom in councils, Epko meetings, and the "cabinet" of the Obong.

In contrast to the Ibo, the Efik developed economic, political, and social institutions which were tribal rather than village in scope, and which emphasized a centralization of power in the hands of men who reached their position through birth as seniors in a family of power. The possible arena of activity for a "natural leader" among the Efik was severely restricted and, in fact, most of the men who achieved prominence through these qualities were slaves who acted as the relatively independent delegates of their owners.

THE HISTORY OF CALABAR

A short history of Calabar which draws heavily on a diary written by an Efik trader already exists.⁷ It is not necessary to write here a detailed account of the events of the 250 or 300 years about which we have knowledge. What is essential is that the history of the town be sketched in such a way that the adjustment of the two tribes to it in modern times can be seen in appropriate context.

The history of Calabar between 1700 and 1800 is the history of the Slave Trade in the area. European contact before 1700 was desultory and sporadic. After that time it became intensive and extensive. The contact during the 18th century was almost exclusively between the Efik and the captains of slaving vessels or their supercargoes. The Slave Trade took the form of the "trust trade". In this system large amounts of capital goods were entrusted to a native trader who offered guarantees of slaves equivalent in value within a given period, usually a year. The deliveries could be made in small lots or all at once, though the latter was preferred since it was difficult or impossible to maintain holding areas except on land and therefore under the control of the native trader. The goods advanced were stored by the trader in warehouses ashore and were completely under his control for disposal. Permanent trading establishments consisted of ships anchored in the river. Periodically ships from Europe brought more goods and picked up slave cargoes for transport to the New World. The commonly held picture of the Slave Trade being under the control of Europeans who dominated the native through military power is certainly not accurate for Calabar. The trade was in the hands of the Efik, and the Europeans were in the area on the sufferance of the tribe. It was

⁷ Forde, C. D., *Efik Traders of Old Calabar*, IAL, OUP (London, 1956).

not until the mid-1800s that Europeans were even allowed to spend the night ashore. Further, each ship which entered the river and anchored off Calabar had to pay duty to the Efik for the privilege of anchoring and engaging in trade.

Calabar is the first protected anchorage up the Cross River from the bar at the mouth where the river enters the Gulf of Guinea. The Efik thus blocked the expansion of the trade into the upper reaches of the river, and also blocked contact between up-river tribes and the Europeans. Their economic position as middlemen was supported by their geographic position. Until late in the 19th century it was difficult or impossible for any Europeans to receive permission to contact people inland from the Efik.

Although real control of the trade rested in the hands of the Efik, certain problems arose which forced the Efik to make political and economic adjustments to the trade. The question of duty was a vexing one for the Europeans. While the fees exacted were not exorbitant, in light of the profits of the trade, the supercargoes often found themselves paying the duty two and three times over since different Efik could with some justice claim to have the power to prevent the trade unless they received payment. An additional problem arose in the nature of the trust trade. If a native took goods and then failed to deliver the number or quality of slaves agreed upon, the trader had no recourse except to boycott that particular trader. Since other Europeans were willing to take risks, even if they knew that the individual they were trading with was unreliable, an unscrupulous native could cause considerable loss to individual traders. In an attempt to solve both of these problems, the supercargoes made representations to Efik men they considered to be leaders in Calabar. It was suggested that the payment of duty be regularized by setting a specific fee to be paid to a recognized representative of all the Efik. Further, the supercargoes asked for guarantees by the Efik over the behavior of individual Efik traders. The Efik were thus asked to establish a system of market policing. This request was backed with the implied threat of withdrawal of trade and/or the raising of prices of European goods because of the high overhead involved in doing business. The Efik responded to this by making what appeared minor changes in the trade system, but which developed into major changes in the entire culture of the tribe.

The Obong was set up as the only legal representative of the tribe. He was to receive the duty paid by ships, and to oversee the general conduct of business. His decisions could be appealed only to the Epko Society, and the society undertook to support his decisions by the violent sanctions which it used in the conduct of tribal affairs. The Obong, with the agreement of the Epko Society, was also to determine who were and who were not licensed to trade with the Europeans. Any others attempting to engage in trade were not guaranteed by the tribe and the supercargo would deal with them only at his own risk. In addition, unlicensed traders were subject to pressure brought on them by the Obong and the Epko Society.

The results of these changes in the structure of trade had far-reaching effects in the economic sphere. Trade rapidly became concentrated in the hands of the etubom since they could muster the capital necessary to ensure delivery of slaves; could afford the warehousing of goods taken on trust; could organize the fruitful use of the large numbers of slaves until the time of delivery; and since they were the powers in the Epko Society and elected the Obong. The political results were inevitable. The etubom became extremely powerful as individuals and developed into a managerial class with responsibility in the political sphere as well as in the economic. The Obong's power was enhanced since he was the only intermediary between etubom who might be in conflict with one another. In addition, the European traders apparently saw the election of the Obong as a representative as the creation of a "king" rather than as the election of a harbor master. Accordingly, they tendered honor and presents of substantial value, such as a house made of corrugated iron which was fabricated in England and erected in Calabar as the first two-storeyed house seen in the area. A further confirmation of the European misconception of the political structure may have arisen through the existence of an Efik name *ntuk* perceived by Europeans as "Duke" and understood as a title. Thus the Europeans considered themselves to be dealing with an almost feudal social system and reinforced the power of the Obong and the etubom through their treatment of these leaders.

The increase in the power of the etubom and the Obong also had serious effects on other aspects of the life of the Efik. The wealth of the individual Efik became increasingly tied to the power and wealth of the etubom who headed his house. The etubom became surrounded with retainers rather than simply members of his extended family. The necessity of keeping large numbers of slaves over long periods of time resulted in increasing use of slave labor for farming, handicrafts, heavy labor, and even minor executive functions within the economic corporation of the ufok. The Efik increasingly became people of leisure, living off the unearned profits of the Slave Trade. This is evident today in Efik identification of all occupations involving physical labor (save farming) as "slave work" or "Ibo work" and thus not a fitting occupation for a self-respecting Efik. The development of this attitude made considerable difference in the reaction of the Efik to Christian mission efforts in Calabar.

The first mission activity at Calabar began in 1846 with the establishment of the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) on land given by the Efik. The land was, it is true, tabued land because it was an area of disposal of defiled corpses, but the land was given, and the missionaries came with the agreement of the tribe, and perhaps even by invitation. By 1873 the Efik language had been reduced to writing and the Bible translated into Efik by Goldie, who also published a dictionary of the language. The early difficulties of the missionaries were minor, relative to the experience of missions in other areas,

and by 1900 the CSM wielded great power in the political and social affairs of Calabar. The CSM used education as its main technique for winning converts, and the Efik jumped to a position of prominence in all of the Oil Rivers Protectorate and beyond because of their high rate of literacy and competence as clerks in the expanding colonial administration of West Africa. Calabar was the earliest educational center in what is now Nigeria, and many of the present leaders of the country had some of their education in Calabar. It still has more primary and secondary schools per capita than any city larger than 10,000 in Nigeria.⁸

The educational prominence of the Efik was matched by early and extensive conversion to Christianity. For all practical purposes the Efik are totally Christianized and have been for 50 years or more. At the present time in Calabar, the only figures who could be called prominent in Efik history as individuals are three missionaries, Rev. Hope Waddell (founder of the CSM), "Ma" Anderson, and Mary Slessor. This early conversion and "civilization" is a matter of considerable pride to the Efik. They have seen themselves for some time as the elite of the surrounding tribes because of their literacy and Christianity. One informant even explained to me that nationalism meant that the Efik had to take up the "white man's burden" and carry on the work of civilizing the savage tribes who were still heathen. The impression one gets in visiting the homes of prominent Efik in Calabar today is that one has stumbled into a Victorian British household with the physical characteristics of a middle class English home and the feeling of moral responsibility for the welfare of the less fortunate.

When the Slave Trade was abolished early in the 19th Century, Efik fortunes suffered a slight reversal, but recovered almost immediately as the export of palm oil took up the economic slack. As the palm oil commerce increased the Efik strengthened their position as middlemen through domination of the river trade and through possession of large numbers of slaves. Increase in the amount and diversity of British trade with the area forced the British government to play a more important role in the administration of the area. In 1895 the Oil Rivers Protectorate was proclaimed and British administration of the Cross, Niger, and Qua Rivers was unified. The Colony of Lagos was administered separately, but the whole of southern Nigeria came to be considered as a politico-economic unit. The formalization of British administration had two rather important effects on the Efik and on Calabar. First, the choice of Calabar as the capital of the Protectorate moved the town into real prominence in the Gulf of Guinea. Both commerce and political administration were centralized in Calabar, and the relations between the Efik and Europeans became closer. The Efik who did not hold powerful financial and political positions were attracted into colonial administrative

⁸ *PCEN*, 1954.

posts, and their availability and competence as clerks made them a favored group in the estimation of the British. The policy of indirect rule had not been enunciated when the Protectorate was established, but the high mortality of Europeans, and their reluctance to accept administrative posts in what they considered an insalubrious climate made it difficult to recruit Europeans, especially for less important posts. The Efik admirably filled the requirements of both competence and recruitability. The Efik were now committed to rapid acculturation on the model of the British society of the time. Modern Calabar reflects this identification in the nostalgia of the older Efik for the society that flourished in the late Victorian time. The graciousness of that time compared with the present is often alluded to, and contemporary decisions are judged in terms of standards of that time.

The establishment of the Protectorate was the first major step in the spread of the *pax Britannica* in southern Nigeria. Inter-tribal warfare began to wane with the abolishment of the Slave Trade, was further reduced by the activities of the missions, and was virtually eliminated by early in the 20th century. The last stronghold of "primitive violence" was destroyed in 1929 when the ritual center at Arochuku was crushed by military action. The importance of the army units stationed at Calabar rapidly declined after that time, and the extensive barracks today stand empty, the only living reminder of the army being an enormous bougainvillea vine which was the pride of the last commander.

As the area became pacified and Calabar grew in importance as a commercial and administrative center, the immigration of people from surrounding tribes increased. We do not have accurate figures for the number of "foreign" Africans in Calabar until the census of 1930.⁹ At that time the number of Ibo was 303 adult males. The accuracy of this figure was questioned even by the compiler of the census and certainly is not accurate within less than 25 %. The difficulty of taking censuses in African areas is well known and needs no further comment here. There is, however, an additional factor which enters the situation in Calabar. The Efik possession of slaves over a long period of time meant that they had to be used as productively as possible. One solution was the extension of Efik owned lands both up and down the river. Expansion inland from the river was limited by the occupation of these areas by other tribes, and by the difficulties of maintaining control over areas so difficult of access. How many Ibo were actually employed by the Efik on out-lying "plantations" is not known, but a slave organization became powerful enough to cause serious alarm as early as 1858.¹⁰ What percentage of the slaves were Ibo is also not known, but it seems likely that

⁹ Cox, H. G., *Census of Nigeria of 1931*, Crown Agents for the Colonies (London, 1932).

¹⁰ Jones, G. I., "The Political Organization of Old Calabar in C. D. Forde, *Efik Traders of Old Calabar*, IAI, OUP. (London, 1956).

THE IBO

they represented a very significant majority since a large percentage of the slaves exported from Calabar were Ibo in origin. While some of the "plantations" were (and are) as much as 40 miles from Calabar, the slave population of them must be considered as part of the population of the town for sociological purposes. The figure of 303 Ibo in 1930 should be taken as an absolute minimum. Contemporary Efik old enough to have known the situation well at that time claim that the true number *in the city itself* was in the order of 1000.

The number of Ibo in Calabar who were slaves or the descendants of slaves began to be augmented after the crushing of the Arochuku Oracle in 1929. The high population density of the Ibo lands and the commercial opportunities of Calabar led to increased migration which speeded up during World War II when the port activity at Calabar reached its peak in recent history. The population of Ibo in the town in 1958 was at least 15,000, and the Ibo and Efik both believe that the number is still increasing through migration. It is clear that it is increasing through a high birth rate and low death rate of the Ibo. The proportion of Ibo birth to Efik births during the period 1946-1958 averaged three to one. Infant mortality is about the same for the two groups. The Ibo death rate appears much lower, but there is considerable emigration of aged Ibo, so it is impossible to determine exactly the true rate. These demographic facts are related to a complex of social and cultural patterns which are manifested in the differential adjustment of the two groups to the conditions of modern Calabar. The two cultures form two societies within the larger society of the town itself. The differences in the two societies are most clearly marked in the occupational distributions, associations, and educational practices of the Ibo and the Efik in Calabar.

IBO AND EFIK SOCIETIES IN MODERN CALABAR

Occupations

The combination of commerce and administration which supports Calabar gives rise to a large number of diverse occupations. The vote registration rolls compiled in 1959 show voters listing 156 different recognizable occupations (e.g. "trader", "carpenter", etc.) and 52 occupations which I cannot recognize (e.g. "ex-veteran", "applicant", "noodler", etc.). The striking aspect of these rolls is that every single one of the recognizable occupations is practised by at least one Ibo. There is no kind of work done that is not done by Ibo. There is, of course, an uneven distribution of Ibo in various categories. Only 1% of the Ibo listed their occupation as "farmer". This is partially because the land which is farmed in and around Calabar is owned by Efik rather than Ibo, and because farmers are less likely to register in the town than in the

area where the farm lies. The largest occupation groups of Ibo are in the skilled trades (30%) and in trade (32%). The skilled trades practised by the Ibo are chiefly carpentry, tin-smithing, and bricklaying. The typical Ibo pattern in these trades is self-employment. The carpenter does not work on contract, but makes boxes and furniture which he sells from his shop to casual customers. He may own more than one shop, and he may employ apprentices or other carpenters. The management of the business is entirely in his hands, and the capital is his. The initial investment for tools, space, and materials may be borrowed from relatives or friends, or may be savings from apprenticeship or another occupation. When an Ibo carpenter does undertake piece work on contract, he asks piece pay and not time pay. His rationalization for so doing is to be able to set his own pace, though he usually does not leave the job until it is finished. There appears to be some correlation between the particular trade followed and the home area of the workmen. Thus there are more carpenters from Awka, which is famous for woodcarving, than from Onitsha or Bende, which are now famous for trade.

The large number of unskilled workers (10%) is not surprising in view of the relative lateness of mission and educational activity in Iboland and the consequent low educational and skill levels of the Ibo who come to Calabar. The Ibo who immigrate often have been pushed off the land because they are younger sons and there is neither land for them, nor wealth for bride price. They arrive in Calabar without capital or skills and their only recourse is to unskilled labor no matter how exhausting or demeaning.

In contrast to this group is the equally large group of clerical workers. The Ibo have discovered that clerical work is rewarding in many ways, and they are increasingly attracted to it rather than to skilled trades. Several informants in the skilled trades complained about the difficulty of recruiting apprentices since young men realized that the time spent in learning a trade could just as well be spent in school preparing for a more prestigious occupation. The present state of the economy in Nigeria means that a man with six years of schooling is almost assured of a job as a clerk in a commercial or governmental office. The Ibo clerk is playing an increasing role not only in the economy of the country, but his voice is becoming louder in non-professional matters. As an interpreter of Western culture, he has risen in prestige relative to men older and more experienced but less apt at the managerial manipulations required for participation in Western institutions.

Over 13% of the Ibo voters listed their occupation as "housewife". As an occupational group they are less important than most others because their activities are more diffuse. What seems to be important about them is that the occupational category "housewife" is recognized as a legitimate one by the Ibo. This is not to say that Ibo women have solved the contemporary Western problem of "career or family?" by elevating the woman's role in the home. Rather it is an expression of Ibo confidence in the legitimacy of con-

sidering a wife's work an occupation of the same sort as that of a husband.

The largest single occupational category of Ibo is trade. While the individuals who make up this group are not all in the same kind of trade, nor does trade make up the bulk of the income of some of them, it is an occupation of importance out of proportion with the numbers involved. The Ibo in Calabar visualize themselves as traders rather than as skilled workers, servants, housewives, unskilled workers, or anything else. The term "trade", as used by voters in registration, includes everything from the importation of shiploads of cement and an annual gross business of \$100,000 to the sale of cigarettes for a penny each and an annual gross of \$10. Trade is the occupation one follows if no other work is available, or if progress in another field is blocked. The young man who is fired from a job as a servant immediately begins to sell bread until he can find another position. One of my informants reached the top of the salary scale for teachers in the elementary grades, felt he was too old to get more education to improve his professional background, and opened what turned out to be the biggest book store in the city. The Ibo attitude toward trade summarizes Ibo attitudes toward work of all kinds.

The Ibo feel that a man *should* work, that he should be as independent of others as possible, and that success results from frugality and industry. If the Ibo is a carpenter, he *sells* his products—he does not work for another man on contract. If he is an unskilled worker, he expects to save enough to go into business for himself somehow and sometime. If he is a clerk he is, of course, considerably less independent, but even here the Ibo chooses to work for commerce rather than government. Government positions have shorter hours, carry more prestige, and have more vacation, but commerce pays better and the chances for advancement are not as closely tied to seniority. The Ibo feeling that a man should work does not mean that work is good for itself, but that each man should try to "get ahead" through frugality and industry. No work is "beneath" an Ibo's dignity. Only sloth is. In this, as in many other aspects of occupation, the Ibo contrast with the Efik.

Unlike the Ibo, the Efik are not distributed through all occupations. There are, in fact, only about 15 occupations followed by the Efik and 31 % of the Efik are farmers. It is not clear whether this means that they own land or work someone else's land, but it appears that they do derive their income from land, most of which does not lie within the city. Many Efik farmers who live some distance from the city maintain residences in the city, either with relatives or simply by listing a friend's house as their place of residence. Also included in the category are those Efik women who have a small garden in the compound and sell some of the produce in the market.

Skilled labor accounts for 29% of the Efik labor force. The nature of this group is quite different from the comparable group among the Ibo. Very few of the Efik operate shops where they sell products they have manufactured. Most of the skilled labor works on contract or as salaried employees of the

government or business offices in the city. Many of these Efik list their occupation not as "carpenter" but as "building contractor" or as "construction engineer". Some have purchased college degrees from diploma mills abroad. One Efik of my acquaintance made soap in his bathtub and listed his occupation as "nuclear metallurgist"—with a D.Sc. degree to prove it.

The only other occupational group which is important for the Efik is "clerical" (16%). The historic reasons for this have been discussed above.

A large number of Efik are unemployed. No figures for this category are available, but the number of Efik who list their occupation as "applicant" or "ex-student" suggests it. My estimate of the unemployment is based almost entirely on informants' opinions, and a sample of 312 houses in a "typical" ward in the city. In this sample, the tribal and occupational distribution was close to that of the city as a whole. The 97 Efik households included 112 Efik adult men, 13 of whom are unemployed. Since this area is by no means the poorest area in which Efik live, I estimate that the percentage of unemployed Efik men in Calabar is between 10 and 20%. This matches the opinion of Efik informants.

The large number of unemployed Efik reflects certain attitudes toward work which the Efik have in contrast with the Ibo. The Efik classify all occupations into two categories: respectable and "slave work". The latter is almost anything which involves manual labor (save farming). This is the reason that the Efik skilled worker lists his occupation as "contractor". The implied executive nature of the employment compensates for the otherwise unrespectable labor. Only 1% of the Efik listed their occupation in such a way that it could be categorized as unskilled. The Efik do not believe that a man *should* work. Rather, they believe that a man should work at a respectable occupation. If no such job is available, he should wait until something comes along which is. It is no disgrace to be unemployed—it is a disgrace to take a job below the dignity of an Efik man. If a servant is fired, he does not sell bread, but waits until he can get another position as a servant.

Associations

The single most important voluntary association of the Ibo in Calabar is the tribal union. It is a highly structured, well-organized, and efficient organization. I shall discuss it under the name "Ibo Federal Union" (IFU). This name is properly applied only to the small organizational unit at the top of the structural hierarchy, but "IFU" is used generally to refer to the whole tribal union. The structure of the IFU is best described as a pyramid of units the membership of which is of common geographic origin. At the lowest level of the IFU are groups which draw their members from Ibo who originate in the same village or from the same clan or extended family in the village.

This "family union" has a structure which reflects the close associations of the members. The officers are almost always those men and women who would have been leaders of the group in the home area. Members contribute to the funds of the family union at the rate of about three cents per week for an adult man and one cent a week for a adult woman. Meetings are held weekly, usually on Sunday, in the home of the head of the family union. Refreshments may be served at the expense of the host, but they are light and inexpensive. The meeting concerns itself with the affairs of the members, their needs, and with the new arrival in town of members. The family union settles disputes between its members, collects funds for the repatriation of ill or deceased members, and greets new arrivals from the home area. It is the closest knit and most important of all tribal union groups in the performance of services for members. These groups provide a home away from home for the Ibo newly arrived in Calabar. The new immigrant finds in the town people he knows and who know him. Often his arrival has been anticipated and a welcome is ready. He is welcomed for the news he brings of the home village, and for the fact that he is "one of ours". The family union helps the migrant to settle as rapidly as possible: he is helped in finding a place to live, he is told where he may be able to get work, and the influence of the prominent men in the union is brought to bear to secure him employment. He may be loaned money until he gets on his feet. In my investigation of family unions, I concerned myself with the problem of recruitment to them. Repeatedly I asked informants what happened if a man did not on arrival come to the appropriate family union and ask for admittance. I was somewhat baffled by the answers to this question, but not nearly as baffled as my informants were by the question itself. After some weeks of following this line of inquiry, it suddenly dawned on me that the question was entirely without meaning to my informants. The absorption of an individual into his family union was such a natural and inevitable thing that my informants were simply unable to conceive of anything else happening.

The family union elects one or two of its members to act as representatives to the "district union". This group has the same functions as the family union, but its membership is drawn from several family unions. All of the constituent family unions have a geographic origin in the same administrative district. The district union operates in cases too large for the family union to handle. If a member of a family union needs repatriation and the cost is too great to be borne alone by the treasury of his own family union, the district union may take up the case and meet the costs. If there is a dispute between two men who are members of different family unions but whose family unions are members of the same district union, the officers of the district union may act as arbitrators. The funds of the district union are collected from contributions of the family unions. Above the district union is the divisional union, and above it the provincial union. The latter elects representatives to

the Ibo Federal Union proper. This small group at the apex of the geographic pyramid of tribal unionism is the highest union body in Calabar. It is one branch of the national organization which covers every major city in Nigeria.

The functions of the various unions are the same whatever their level: collection of funds to aid individual Ibo, arbitration in disputes without recourse to formal European law agencies; and representation of the Ibo in Calabar.

The IFU is the most important group in the Ibo society of Calabar. Through it the individual Ibo is identified with other persons of the same geographic origin as himself and with similar interests. The organization demands little in the way of financial support, but because of its universality among the Ibo, it controls rather large amounts of money. This money is used for the social and political welfare of the Ibo, both as individuals and as groups. Funds are distributed to individuals in times of need, money is set aside and later contributed to building funds to establish and maintain hospitals and schools in the home territories of Iboland, and the IFU uses funds to insure that the Ibo are not discriminated against politically in the area where they are strangers. The IFU provides the socio-political structure in which the Ibo individual operates in the urban situation. The unity of the village is preserved to some extent in the lower level organizations within the IFU, but the larger organizations handle situations which are beyond the capacity of the individual or his family union. The leaders of the higher levels of the IFU are recognized spokesmen for the tribe in dealing with outsiders, and the IFU provides social welfare services unavailable through any other mechanisms in the city.

The IFU is both a symptom and a cause of a growing cultural selfconsciousness of the Ibo. Where in the traditional way of life the Ibo man lived as a member of a village having little or no friendly contact with other villages in Iboland, having no idea that he was a member of a huge cultural group, the Ibo, he now views himself as a member of one of the largest and most powerful groups in the new nation called Nigeria. He sees the fantastic success of the Ibo people in all endeavors in the last few years, and he is beginning to consider himself as part of a group destined to lead all of Nigeria in the development of a new kind of society. He is increasingly proud of being an Ibo, and the annual celebration of "Ibo Day" is developing into a very important cultural ceremony. The village point of view has expanded into a tribal or even national point of view.

The other organizations to which the Ibo belong include contribution clubs (*esusu*), common interest groups (such as athletic clubs) and churches. The *esusu* serve important functions in amassing capital for individual expenditure. They are not tribal groups except by the accident of common tribal origin of members. They play no important social role in the life of the Ibo in Calabar. The common interest groups are similarly limited in importance. Both of

these kinds of organizations take up time for the individual Ibo, and they help the adjustment to the urban environment by substituting for organizations found in the village, or by meeting needs peculiar to the urban situation. While they are not of importance in themselves, they are important in providing other techniques for the Ibo adjustment. It is clear that such organizations are more commonly joined by Ibo than by other tribal groups.

The churches to which the Ibo belong play more of a social role than a theological one. No church in Calabar maintains records of its members divided by tribe. Most churches do not even maintain records of the total number of members. Information on church membership is available only from the estimate of informants, both church officials and members of the church. From these estimates it is possible to say one thing with considerable certainty: the Ibo in Calabar belong to the large established Christian churches, or they are pagans. The large majority of Ibo Christians are members of the Roman Catholic, Church of England, Methodist, or Presbyterian persuasions. These churches, especially the first and last, are the largest and most respectable churches in Calabar. The reason for the success of these churches among the Ibo population is a difficult one to determine precisely, but the following are important: "civilization" is equated with "Christianity" in the minds of many Ibo. To be civilized, one must be a Christian. It is clear to the Ibo that the churches mentioned above are the most socially acceptable churches among Europeans and are, therefore, the *best* representatives of civilization. In addition, these are the churches which maintain the most extensive educational establishments. Education is also civilization and is the obvious route to economic and social success in the new nation state. The Ibo support these churches because the churches support Ibo aspirations. Lastly, the Ibo are not a highly religious people in the sense that personal salvation or theological points interest them. The Ibo visualize the church as a social institution, and support it to the extent that it performs useful social functions. Thus an individual Ibo man who finds it useful or necessary to take a second wife will withdraw from the Catholic congregation, but his wives will continue to attend mass, and his children will stay in the Catholic school. He will continue to support the church financially though he himself is not a member in good standing.

The sociological contrast between the Ibo and the Efik is most marked in the nature of voluntary organizations. Where the Ibo have one major association (IFU) to which all belong, and many smaller groups with limited membership and limited aims, the Efik have no organization which can claim more than a simple majority of the tribe as members. Where the IFU is highly structured, hierarchical, and efficient, the Efik organizations are loosely structured and largely ineffective in carrying out the programs which they were formed to promote.

The Epko Society still exists, and many Efik insist that it is the only "really

Efik" organization. It still limits its membership to adult males, and is said to be ranked internally. The change in the nature of the Epko is evident in the fact that although the Obong is still considered the head of the society, and the etubom leaders in it, complaints are voiced by informants that the society no longer reflects the nature of Efik society truly. Specifically, men have achieved leading roles within the society without being leaders in Efik society in general. Conversely, some of the leaders of modern Efik society hold low positions within Epko and/or have little interest in Epko. The well educated Efik consider Epko a cultural relic with little pertinence in the modern situation. The reason for the decline of Epko is quite clear. The organization was able to maintain its dominance in legislative, juridical and executive matters only through its control of violent sanctions against individual Efik. The introduction of Western legal forms has repressed these sanctions, or they have been taken under the control of the state. The only sanction left to Epko is supernatural—the violator of Epko rules is cursed and dies. As the educational level of the Efik rose, the belief in the supernatural powers of the society waned. Only the less successful in adapting to Western culture retain belief in the powers. Hence, the strongest support for Epko comes from the least educated and successful in modern society.

One of the substitutes for Epko has been the political party. The Efik can legitimately claim preeminence in the movement for independence from British colonial rule. The first parties organized with independence as a stated goal were organized by the Efik, and the Efik provided leadership for them. However, the increase of education and political consciousness among other tribes in Nigeria has increased the competition for leadership within parties, and the Efik have been pushed into the background by sheer weight of numbers. In reaction to this, the Efik have formed six (as of 1961) new political "movements". Each of these has been an expression of the Efik fear that the government of the Eastern Region will be dominated by the Ibo, and that the rights of the Efik and other minority tribes will not be respected. The Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers Movement (COR) was an attempt to organize the peoples of the non-Ibo provinces into a political force which would balance the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in the affairs of the region. The NCNC is regarded by many Efik as the captive of the Ibo tribe and as favoring the Ibo in the allocation of funds for development, the appointment to government positions, and in the general conduct of the affairs of the movement of the Eastern Region, where the NCNC is the Government party. The COR was termed a "movement" rather than a party in order to avoid alienating those Efik who maintain allegiance to the NCNC as the party formed by the Efik to fight for independence. It was hoped to wean these men away from the NCNC gradually by arousing feelings of tribal loyalty which would override feelings of party loyalty. The organization lasted only 3 years (1957-60) and then dissolved, at least as

far as Efik participation is concerned. In this career, it matched four previous organizations originating with the Efik, designed to awaken a strong feeling of tribal unity, and collapsing because of centrifugal forces within it. In no case did the organization succeed in getting more than half-hearted support from the whole tribe, even though COR was supported financially and organizationally by a national political party which hoped to strengthen its position *vis-à-vis* the NCNC. COR, like the organizations which preceded it, had no clear internal structure, and its leadership was more or less self-appointed and self-regulating. Its history was marred with internal disputes, defections by leaders and men prominent in it, and resistance to it on the part of some Efiks of high social status.

Efik religious activity reflects the same sort of organizational instability as COR and other political organizations. The church of the Efik is traditionally the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM). The actual membership of Efik in the church at present is not known exactly, but it is clearly larger than membership in any other congregation—perhaps as large as membership in all other congregations combined. In addition to numbers, the CSM certainly dominates socially. The Obong and most of the etubom are members of it, and most of the newer leaders of the Efik are elders in one or another of the CSM churches in Calabar. However, membership in a church does not, for the Efik, mean exclusive adherence to that church. The leading minister of the CSM complained bitterly in public when prominent Efik contributed funds to the construction of the Roman Catholic cathedral in Calabar. Not all members of the CSM send their children to schools sponsored by the CSM, and most important, the members of the CSM cannot be relied upon not to join other churches suddenly and for no reason apparent to the officials of the church. A number of prominent Efik left the CSM and joined another Protestant church in 1958 in order to “prevent Ibo domination” of any church in Calabar. The rationalization for supporting the Catholic cathedral was that the building itself would be a source of pride to the people of Calabar, and the Efik are, above all, *the* people of Calabar (“Sons of the Soil” is a phrase often used to make this point). Not only do Efik shift allegiance from church to church, but may as individuals participate in religious activities not even recognized as legitimate by church authorities. Recent years have seen the rise of “prayer houses” which are commercial or semi-commercial enterprises dealing in revelation, personal experience of the divine, and mixture of Christian and pagan practices (much beating of drums and the offering of libations of palm wine). Efik flit in and out of these religious organizations, or participate in them *and* the activities of “regular” churches at the same time. One elder of the CSM even formed a “prayer house” himself. Efik informants were unanimous in support of his “right” to do this “if his conscience directed”. They were surprised and hurt in some cases by the adamant attitudes of the ministers and church officials against this man’s

activities. One extremely intelligent and well-educated Efik informant gave his opinion that this man was insane, but the majority felt he was legitimately expressing a difference of opinion about the nature of religion.

The pattern of Efik relationship to Christian churches is a simple one. There is strong emphasis upon the physical nature of the church and on its expression of social aims. There is little or no interest in theological orthodoxy nor the practical benefits from membership. No single church can act as a unifying force in the tribe, because "all Christians worship the same God" and, therefore, the differences between churches are matters of no moment.

Education

While the subject of education is not central to my thesis, it may prove instructive to compare briefly the attitude of the Efik and the Ibo toward modern education.

Because of the early emphasis of missionaries on education, Calabar is very school-conscious. One of the first activities of any mission group in modern Calabar is to establish a school or schools. These educational activities play a very important part in the mission, both financially and in the impact and effectiveness of the institution. The two largest missions in Calabar, the Roman Catholic and the CSM, maintain educational staffs which are considerably larger than the staffs assigned to religious or other activities. The stress upon education by missions has had important effects on the reaction of the two tribes to mission activity, and the identification of education *with* the missions has resulted in a significant difference in the reactions of the two tribes to education.

While the available data on education in Calabar are limited in quantity and quality, there is considerable evidence that there are more Ibo than Efik in school—especially in the lower grades. What is clearer than the habits of the two groups in regard to school enrollment, is the difference between them in attitudes toward the educational process. The Ibo treat education as a means to an end. Literacy is the single most important aspect of education to the Ibo, and great effort is made to see all children through infant school at the very least. The next most important step is the acquisition of "Standard VI" Certificate, i.e., the completion of primary school. It is the *completion* of these grades, not merely attending them. To have partially completed a course of study is of no use at all. Employers will not recognize the work taken after infant school unless the certificate has been granted. The diplomas and certificates of the Nigerian educational system are, to the Ibo, building blocks in a career, and a half a block is no better than none. The drop-out rate of Ibo children is most marked at the points where the educational system itself has recognized important stages: after two years of

infant school; at the end of six years of primary school (when the Standard VI is awarded); and at the end of secondary school.

To the Efik, education is a process and an end in itself. Education is part of the tribal tradition, and the Efik glory in their own early preeminence among Nigerian tribes in the field of education. The schools of Calabar, and the educators who man them, are a source of pride to the Efik community. The individual Efik student is seen as taking part in his tribal heritage. It is better to get a certificate than to drop out before the course of study is completed, but it is decidedly better to have started and failed than never to have started at all. Efik individuals are always clear to specify the last grade attended rather than the last certificate received in their own career and in the career of others. It is the Efik man, not the Ibo, who lists his occupation as "ex-student".

DISCUSSION

The comparison of voluntary organizations in many different cultures at many different times would be a worthwhile enterprise, but one too extensive for these pages. I should like, therefore, to compare the situation in Calabar as I have outlined it, with just one other situation. I feel that this limited comparison is useful and legitimate because the cultural backgrounds and the colonial histories of the two situations are so vastly different, and because the readers of this journal will be familiar with the admirable presentation of the comparative case.

In the *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, volume III, Number 1 (October 1960), Maurice Freedman presented the case of the Chinese in Singapore. The present article has frankly copied the title of Freedman's article to emphasize the comparability of the cases. Here I would like to summarize what I consider the most interesting points of comparison, without, I hope, doing violence to Freedman's material.

In Singapore there are two major cultural groups with which Freedman is concerned in discussing the formation of voluntary associations and secret societies. One of these groups, the Babas, "were Chinese in their social identity, but in language and some other cultural respects they resembled the Malays among whom they lived." Their adjustment to Singapore was effective. They came to occupy high economic position and they became highly educated and influential. Under pressure from later Chinese migrants they retired to "safe" clerical jobs and withdrew from economic competition. They never, apparently, developed the elaborate and extensive secret societies and voluntary organizations that later migrants did. The criteria of membership, techniques of organization, and effectiveness of the associations of later migrants bear a striking resemblance to the associations formed by the Ibo

in Calabar. They were, first of all, mostly based on the place of origin of the individual member. For all practical purposes they took over the functions of civil and criminal jurisdiction within their own ranks, just as the IFU has preempted the legal functions of the local government in Calabar. The other functions which the Chinese groups performed included most of those which in China were the responsibility of the local community: meeting of short term financial needs; the regulation of funeral rites and duties; etc. The Chinese secret societies provided a focus of loyalty for the immigrant. In effect, the cultural role of the local community was grafted onto a population physically removed from its individual and separate geographic settings.

In the occupational sphere, there was economic specialization by dialect groups in Singapore just as there is among the Ibo in Calabar.

Freedman summarizes the nature of these immigrant groups by a probabilistic statement of implied generality: "When immigrants are thrown down in a strange setting where they must make their social life among themselves, they are likely to divide into units which express the solidarity of homeland ties." (p. 43).

I would like to push the analysis a bit further by seeing these associations as adaptational devices and by relating the use of these devices to the nature of the culture from which the immigrants come. The adaptational problems of the individual migrant are, conceptually, very simple. He must earn a living, find shelter, find a wife, etc. The social and cultural problems are not so simple, either conceptually or practically. The individual immigrant is fair game for the strangers among whom he finds himself. His economic welfare may well depend upon his ability to organize into groups which can exert counterpressure against the individuals and groups who wish to exploit him. In addition, he must make serious adjustments to the social and political environment which is new to him. He does this through social and political organizations which meet the new challenges. The problem faced is to find criteria for organization in a situation devoid of the traditional criteria for organization. Further, the environment in which he finds himself may change through time so that the adjustment must vary to meet changing conditions. Freedman summarizes the nature of the changes which take place:

"... the associations which in a small-scale and relatively undeveloped settlement express social, economic, and political links in an undifferentiated form tend, as the scale and complexity of the society increase, to separate into a network of associations which are comparatively specialized in their functions and the kinds of solidarity they express." (p. 47-8).

What is not clear is why some groups are able to make these kinds of adjustments and other groups are not. Why did the Babas retire to safe clerical jobs? Why did they not form associations which could represent them in social, economic, and political affairs? Why were the Efik unable to adjust the structure of the Epko Society to meet the needs of new social conditions?

Why did the Efik retire from economic affairs and lose their dominance of trade and commerce? I suggest that the key lies in Freedman's observation that the increase in complexity of the environment requires increase in specialization of "functions and kinds of solidarity" expressed by the voluntary organizations. A comparison between Chinese and Ibo culture may help in understanding the importance of the cultural background to this specialization.

The Ibo traditional culture resembles the Chinese traditional culture in significant ways. Both are made up of separate and more or less autonomous villages. The primary loyalty of the individual is to the village and not to a social or political organization above the village level. In addition, the alternatives of choice in the culture are great. It is a culture which I term a "generalized" culture. The fact that it is generalized means that it *can* make specializations if the occasion requires. In traditional Ibo culture considered as a whole there were a wide variety of occupations. While all Ibo were farmers, at least part-time, the importance of one crop as against another varied from place to place. In addition there were permitted alternatives in various crafts such as smithing, wood-carving, woven raffia work, pottery-making, etc. The Ibo could trade either his own produce and handicrafts, or he could act as a middleman moving goods from the area of their production to an area of scarcity and taking local products in trade with a profit to himself. In the sphere of politics Ibo traditional culture included centralized political control, kin-based political organizations, title societies, and situations in which political power lay in the hands of individuals who had achieved status through purely individual efforts. Ibo social structure varied from place to place and covered a wide range of possibilities: patrilineages, double descent systems integrated into village political structures in complicated ways, kindreds coterminous with village residence, and bilateral extended families living in villages with other bilateral extended families. Some Ibo areas had age classes; some did not.

While any individual Ibo in any individual village might be exposed in his lifetime to a fairly restricted series of alternative behaviors in the economic, political, and social spheres of life, Ibo culture as a whole was structured in such a way that the culture allowed a wide variety of realizations—dependent on the necessities imposed by the environment and by historical accident and social choice. It was what I have termed a "generalized" culture in that the range of alternatives which it allowed made it possible for the Ibo to specialize to meet conditions which changed, such as when they migrated as individuals to the urban environment.

The changes undertaken by the Efik under the pressures of Europeans during the Slave Trade were specialized adaptations to changed conditions, and reduced the potentialities for further adaptations. The limited alternatives of traditional Efik culture were further reduced through contact and change, and the Efik culture became "specialized". The economic structure

emphasized trade corporations under the management of a few men, limited the kinds of occupations in which an Efik could properly engage, and assigned a large number of occupations to the category of "slave work". When it no longer was possible for the Efik to operate in this manner, they were unable to make the needed adjustments in their attitudes toward work. The concentration of political power in the hands of the Obong, the etubom, and the Epko Society reduced the political alternatives open to the Efik by crystallizing a kind of political specialization the maintenance of which depended upon an economic system which later disappeared. The Epko Society itself was a specialized socio-political organization entirely adequate for the needs of the Efik before extensive colonial control. However, it depended for its existence on the monopoly of violent sanctions. When this monopoly was removed through the imposition of British law forms, the society no longer could serve its functions. The specialized organ of the body politic atrophied.

It seems to me that the specialization of the Efik culture is similar to that of the Babas, and the results are similar. Both the Efik and the Babas made adjustments to a situation, and then the situation changed through the increasing complexity introduced by the colonial powers and the influx of immigrants. The Babas adjusted to early Singapore by developing social ties of family, kinship, and marriage. The Efik developed the institutions of the Obong, etubom, and ufok. Both the Babas and the Efik were dominant and powerful groups in their native cities up to the time of World War II. From that point on the environment of the city changed. The Babas and the Efik were unable to maintain their dominance in the face of increasing complexity of the environment. Their social specialization confined them to a niche of increasingly less importance because they could not compete with the illiterate immigrants. The latter adapted to the new environment because they came from cultures which were generalized and therefore had potentiality for specializations to meet environment shifts.

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NOTES

THE BASES OF NATIONALISM AMONG THE BAKONGO

RENÉ LEMARCHAND

NATIONALIST assertions among the Bakongo have been at the forefront of the active resistance movements which ultimately led the Belgian Government to grant the Congo its independence. These reactions to the Belgian presence, which can be traced back to the early twenties, expressed themselves in highly diversified forms and with varying degrees of intensity. From the early days of the Belgian rule, however, a duality of tendencies has been apparent in the Mukongo cultural heritage. The acceptance of certain Western innovations, on the one hand, combined with a manifest attachment to their cultural background, on the other, accounts for the presence of modernist and traditional strands discernible in present-day attitudes towards authority.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Bakongo peoples form a linguistically and culturally distinct group, at present divided into three different geographical areas. While the vast majority of them (1,200,000) inhabit the Republic of the Congo—formerly known as the Belgian Congo—they nevertheless represent an important fraction of the populations of Angola (350,000) and of the Republic of the Congo in French Equatorial Africa (340,000).

Four major tribal groups are located in the Leopoldville Province, namely the Bantandu, the Bandibu, the Manianga, and the Mayumbe, some of them—the Mayumbe, for example—overlapping into the contiguous territories. Other groups, such as the Bansundi, the Bampangu, and the Bambata, are numerically less important. As indicated by the figures in Table I, these groups are heavily concentrated in specific areas, essentially the Cataractes and Bas-Congo Districts, and the Leopoldville region.¹

Oral traditions substantiate historical sources on one important point: The Bakongo were after the first Portuguese colonization divided into at least three kingdoms, Kakongo, Ngyoyo, and Loango, with the first standing in relation to the others as a suzerain towards his vassals.² While there is scant information concerning the other kingdoms, the material at present available on the history of the ancient kingdom of the Kongo nevertheless provides illuminating insights into recent developments.³

¹ The population density of the Bas-Congo District (19·96 per square kilometer) is the highest of all non-urban Districts in the Congo. In the Cataractes the population density is 11·63. It reaches 189·12 in the urban District of Leopoldville. See A. Romaniuk, 'Évolution et perspectives démographiques de la population du Congo', *Zaire*, xiii (1959), 612.

² One of the earliest historians of the Kongo, P. Pigafetta, wrote: 'Les rois de ce pays, qui paraissent avoir été autrefois vassaux de celui du Kongo, se nomment maintenant ses amis': *Le Congo* (Bruxelles: 1883), p. 30. Yet, significantly enough, the separate existence of the three kingdoms was categorically denied in the official organ of the *Abako*. See *Notre Kongo*, 15 May 1960, p. 9.

³ See in particular J. Van Wing, *Études Bakongo*,

2nd ed. (Bruxelles, 1959); Georges Balandier, *Sociologie actuelle de l'Afrique noire* (Paris, 1955); M. Soret, *Les Kongo Nord-Occidentaux* (Paris, 1950). For earlier works on the subject, see P. Pigafetta, *op. cit.*; L. B. Proyard, *Histoire du Loango, Kakongo et autres Royaumes d'Afrique* (Paris, 1776); R. P. Eucher, *Le Congo, essai sur l'histoire religieuse de ce pays depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours* (Huy, 1894); A. Ihle, *Das Alte Königreich Kongo* (Leipzig, 1929). Regardless of the objections which may be raised concerning the reliability of some of the works cited, they have nevertheless made an important contribution towards supporting the legitimacy of the 'myth' of the Kingdom of the Kongo on which modern nationalist claims are founded.

THE BASES OF NATIONALISM AMONG THE BAKONGO

TABLE I

Ethnic Distribution of the Populations of the Lower Congo

Populations	Cataractes District	Bas-Congo District	Leopoldville Area	Total
Mayumbe	..	68.8	1.0	24.0
Manianga	22.8	6.7	6.7	12.7
Bantandu	18.5	0.5	14.9	11.2
Ngombe	8.0	..	5.7	4.5
Bambata	5.5	..	2.7	2.8
Bampangu	2.9	..	1.9	1.6
Balemfu	2.2	..	1.8	1.3
Bansundi	1.7	3.9	0.4	2.1
Bambana	..	5.0	1.0	2.0
Assolongo	..	2.2	..	0.8
Bakongo	..	1.6	..	0.6
Bandibu	21.2	1.1	7.0	10.1
Angola	7.4	5.2	18.9	9.7
Bayaka	..	0.6	3.3	1.1
Bateke	1.4	..	2.0	1.1
Others	8.6	5.4	32.8	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: *Enquêtes Démographiques AIMO*, Deuxième Direction Générale, Fascicules 1-4 (Leopoldville, 1955).

In more recent times the Lower Congo area became the scene of protest movements which found expression in the growth of messianic or nativistic sects. In 1921 the 'prophet' Simon Kimbangu initiated a magico-religious movement which became officially known as the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by Simon Kimbangu. While the manifest objective of the sect founded by Kimbangu was the constitution of an independent African Church incorporating into its dogmas some elements found in the Bible, in its latent forms, at least, it represented a spontaneous resistance movement directed against Western domination.¹ In spite of firm and frequent repressions, separatist religious sects gained an increasing number of devotees in both rural and urban areas. In 1956, as indicated by an official report, forty-six 'leaders' of 'subversive sects' were arrested in the Leopoldville area.² In the same year fifty-seven Ngounzists were reportedly arrested in Matadi, while in other parts of the Lower Congo similar movements reached an alarming scale.³ There is scant evidence to prove that these manifestations were directly instigated by nationalists. But it afforded them the opportunity to claim that they were patent expressions of nationalism and, eventually, to capitalize on their existence to further their own aspirations.

The continued diffusion of the Kimbanguist faith, ensured by an active and, until recently, covert proselytism, partially accounts for two distinguishing features of modern nationalist movements. One is their radical outlook; another is their strong

¹ See E. Andersson, *Popular Prophetic Movements in the Lower Congo* (Uppsala, 1958). An interesting description of the organizational features and dogmatic tenets of Kimbanguism will be found in Paul Raymackers' 'L'Eglise de Jesus Christ sur terre par

le Prophète Simon Kimbangu', *Zaire*, xiii (1959) 576-656.

² *Rapport AIMO, Province de Léopoldville* (Leopoldville, 1956), p. 38.

³ *Ibid.*

THE BASES OF NATIONALISM AMONG THE BAKONGO

attachment to traditional beliefs and symbols. It must be stressed, however, that the orientation of the *Abako*, towards which the vast majority of the Bakongo have directed their loyalties, tends to reflect an attitude rather than a doctrine. A brief survey of the origins of the *Abako* is necessary at this point.

Long before it turned itself into a political party, the *Abako* (*Association pour le maintien, l'unité et l'expansion de la langue Kikongo*) was known as one of the most powerful tribal organizations of the Leopoldville area. Although it was officially recognized by the District Commissioner of the Moyen Congo on 7 July 1953,¹ it had actually been active since 1951. Its founder, Mr. Edmond Nzeza-Nlandu, attended at one time the *grand séminaire* of Mayidi where he became acquainted with Father Van Wing.² Only a few months before his ordination, however, he abandoned the priesthood, moved to Leopoldville, where he went to seek employment as a clerk, and almost immediately set about the task of organizing the *Abako*. The motive for this action was in part a genuine attachment to the culture of the Bakongo, of which he had gained a deeper appreciation and a better knowledge in the course of his frequent contacts with Father Van Wing. But it was also prompted by considerations of a more practical nature. Anticipating the constitutional reform of the *statut des villes* (which finally came into force in December 1957), Nzeza-Nlandu was already aware of the potential advantages that would result from a strong organizational apparatus.

A number of Bakongo, mostly former students of the Jesuit Fathers of Kisantu, had already organized themselves into an association, the *Renaibako* (*Renaissance Bakongo*); but its activities were at that time in a state of quiescence. Nzeza-Nlandu's arrival in Leopoldville reactivated the Kisantu-centred *Renaibako*, infused a new dynamism into the organization, and extended its operational bases to neighbouring areas. In late 1951 the *Abako* extended its action to Isangila and in 1953 to Thysville and its vicinity. In the same year, in response to the charge that the directing organ of the association was unduly weighted in favour of the Bantandu sub-group, Nzeza-Nlandu called upon a Mayumbe, Mr. Joseph Kasa-Vubu, to join the Central Committee of the *Abako*. Once it had received official recognition from Belgian authorities, the organization became increasingly active in two ways. It sought, in the first place, to spread its influence from Leopoldville, Matadi, and Thysville to rural areas, and, in the second, to establish organizational linkages with special interest groups—co-operatives, youth groups, students' associations, and the like.

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

The promotion of Joseph Kasa-Vubu to the rank of President of the *Abako*, in 1955, gave a decidedly militant twist to its activities. Thus, shortly after the so-called 'Manifeste de Conscience Africaine' had become known and publicized, on 23 August 1956, the *Abako* issued a counter-manifesto which took the form of a devastating critique of the views expressed by the editors of *Conscience africaine*. As may be recalled, the latter, taking up an idea which had already been aired by a Belgian

¹ *La Voix du Congolais*, No. 94 (January 1954), p. 61.

² The views contained in this paragraph and the next are based on an interview which this writer

had with Mr. Nzeza-Nlandu in the summer of 1960. They have been largely corroborated by subsequent interviews with other informants.

publicist, advocated a thirty-year time-table for the political emancipation of the Congo from Belgian tutelage.¹ Far more uncompromising in tone and radical in its objectives, the *Abako* manifesto bluntly stated: 'Rather than postponing emancipation for another thirty years, we should be granted self-government to-day.' Arguing that 'political maturity precedes, in many cases, administrative capacity', it went on to urge the Belgian Government to grant full political rights and unrestricted civil liberties to the Congolese. Finally, taking strong exception to the views advanced by the authors of the first manifesto concerning the advisability of a single national front, it denounced any attempt to 'rally all the Congolese to the same opinion' as 'sheer utopia'.²

In presenting their case in favour of a multi-party system for the Congo, the *Abako* leaders sought to rationalize their position by pointing out that political parties 'do not reflect historical circumstances' but 'opinions' and that, consequently, they constitute the indispensable element of a truly democratic system. Yet, if the language of the *Abako* does reveal a certain attachment to democratic principles, it conceals, in fact, an even stronger loyalty to the tribe.³ Affiliation to a political party was viewed as secondary to, and derivative of, affiliation to kinship groups.

Ultimately, the *Abako* leaders conceived of the Congolese nation as an aggregate of distinctive loyalties based on 'ethnic, linguistic, and historical' affinities. In contrast with the views held by the advocates of a Jacobine concept of nationality, the *Abako* leaders favoured the maintenance and preservation of all intermediate groups.

The different phases and aspects of the Bakongo's historical development may help to explain their general political orientation. It is here suggested that (1) their attitudes towards the future character of the Mukongo political entity, (2) the structure of power within such entity, and (3) the symbols of authority assigned to legitimate power-holders, are deeply imbedded in the historical past of their society. The first and most familiar aspect of current nationalist goals is the revival of the tradition of the kingdom of the Kongo, not as it existed or may have existed at the time of the first penetration of Western influences, but as encompassing in its jurisdiction the kingdoms of Luango and Ngoyo.⁴ The stress on the cultural identity of the Bakongo makes it necessary, in the eyes of their leaders, to subordinate the different acculturative influences which have operated under the tutelage of the French, Belgians, and Portuguese to the traditional heritage of the Bakongo as it appears in their language, customs, and history. In the words of a prominent member of the Central Committee of the *Abako*: 'L'Abakisme est une tendance nationaliste qui cherche à grouper des personnes ayant une même origine, même histoire, et des traditions, des coutumes communes, patrimoine des ancêtres, aux fins de sauvegarder la culture africaine et de l'améliorer'.⁵ This theme, obviously designed to foster feelings of common

¹ See *Conscience africaine*, Manifeste (July-August 1956), p. 4.

² See *L'Avenir*, 24 August 1956.

³ 'Puisque cette véritable union des peuples congolais ne pourra se réaliser que par la voie de l'évolution politique, cette évolution . . . doit commencer d'abord sur la base de ce qui existe. Cela veut dire que les groupes historiquement, ethniquement, et linguistiquement unis ou apparentés s'organisent pour former autant de partis politiques.'

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mr. Gabriel Masiala, editor-in-chief of *Notre Kongo*, stated in the issue of 15 May 1960: 'The Kingdom of the Kongo is known since 1482 and included as its provinces, Mpemba, Mbata, Soyo Mbanta, Nsundi and Zombo on the left bank [of the Congo] and Vungu, Mazinga, Nsanga and Luango on the right bank.'

⁶ *Statuts de la République du Congo Central*, Preamble (Leopoldville, 1960), p. 1.

allegiance, has recurred in several of the declarations made by the *Abako* during the colonial era. As early as 1951, the circular announcing the foundation of one of the earliest periodicals to appear in Kikongo, *Kongo Dia Ngunga*, stressed the fact that 'all the Bakongo are issued from a common stock: Kongo dia Ntтила [the Kongo of the Kingdom of San Salvador]'. The cultural unity, which at one time prevailed among the Bakongo, was evoked as the implicit goal towards which all efforts should be directed: 'Since the fall of our beloved kingdom brought about by constant warfare against our neighbours the Yaga, and the slaving activities conducted during the past three centuries, we are no longer united.'¹ The new symbols of 'pan-tribal' allegiance forged by nationalists suggest that the emancipation of the Bakongo located in the former Belgian Congo is only the first step of a drive which will eventually unite the rest of the Bakongo populations.

The 'separatist' tendencies discernible in the programme of the *Abako* found a more recent and extremist expression in the temporary constitution of a Mukongo government, distinct from that of the Republic of the Congo and that of the Leopoldville Province. On 11 June 1960, the thirty-two members of the *Abako* seated in the Provincial Assembly proceeded to co-opt among themselves the members of what was to become the government of the Republic of Central Kongo. While the newly formed 'government' almost immediately came back into the fold of the legitimate government of the Province, its short-lived existence indicates that the chances of a genuine integration remain slight.

In addition to the 'pan-tribal' aspirations just described, nationalist assertions have also been conditioned by the presence of a charismatic leader in the person of the former President of the *Abako*, Joseph Kasa-Vubu.

The centralized character of the structure of power within the *Abako* is reflected in the provision of the Party Statutes according to which 'the President of the Party controls the activities of the Party and those of all related formations'. The same article goes on to specify that '[the President of the Party] makes all political decisions which have been discussed by the Political Bureau. He watches over the life of the Party.'² The prestige enjoyed at one time by Mr. Kasa-Vubu received confirmation shortly after the Brussels Round Table Conference, when a dissident wing of the *Abako* was formed under the leadership of the Vice-President of the party, Mr. Daniel Kanza. Despite the strong financial backing allegedly granted to Mr. Kanza by the Belgian administration, Mr. Kasa-Vubu achieved an overwhelming victory during the general elections. The exclusion of Mr. Kanza from the party in no way diminished the degree of popularity of Mr. Kasa-Vubu. His prestige, however, is not so much the result of formal sanctions emanating from the Central Committee, as of the qualities ascribed to his personality.

Partly as a result of his early nationalist activities, which conferred upon him the title of 'prison graduate', and partly because of the fact that he is looked upon as the embodiment of 'wisdom', Mr. Kasa-Vubu commands from his following a wide measure of deference. The degree of esteem enjoyed by the President of the Republic is clearly brought out from the following litany, which appeared in the official organ of the party:³

¹ *Le Courrier d'Afrique*, 23 November 1953.

³ *Notre Kongo*, 14 February 1960, p. 5.

² *Party Statutes*, article 16.

THE BASES OF NATIONALISM AMONG THE BAKONGO

Tu es plein de courage et de cœur,
De toi le Kongo attend son bonheur,
De toi le Kongo attend sa délivrance,
En toi le peuple a mis sa confiance,
De toi naît l'indépendance.

The range of values identified with the personality of Kasa-Vubu confers upon him infallibility. His role is not only reminiscent of a king's, it is also consciously recognized as a modern version of the king's omnipotence.¹ As a result, his personality overshadows all other offices in the party hierarchy. All initiatives emanating from him receive the sanction of legitimacy.

The carry-over of the traditional attributes of the monarchy is also evidenced by the strong admixture of religious elements in the image of the 'leader'. It is not suggested that the current orientation of the Mukongo polity should develop into a theocratic system. Yet the prerogatives attached to secular power seem to remain strongly imbedded in, and sanctioned by, religious symbols.²

Their manifest attachment to certain traditional symbols of authority represents another important aspect of the political life of the Bakongo. The importance of these symbols is exemplified by the ubiquitous display of the so-called *Kodia*, which is both the emblem of the *Abako* and the symbol of ancestral virtues.³ That this particular object should have been chosen as the distinctive sign of the Bakongo's single political party is of course illustrative of the influence of tradition on modern political movements. It is also significant in another respect. In the words of the official organ of the party, 'the *Kodia* has no property of its own since its powers come from God, in Whom all decision-making powers rest; it merely executes divine prescriptions'.⁴ Implicit in this definition of the role of the *Kodia* is the identification of political success and divine will, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Calvinist ethics.

Another property ascribed to the *Kodia* is the preservation of 'party orthodoxy'. It serves to prevent the occurrence of 'deviationist' or 'heretic' tendencies: 'It is the vigilant guardian of strict orthodoxy. The slightest infraction to the rule may bring a terrible punishment, in particular sterility, sickness and death.' As appears from the foregoing citation, the operational code of the *Abako* draws heavily on the traditional belief system of the Bakongo.

The retention of traditional symbols was also recently illustrated by the following explanation, officially advanced by the *Abako* for its victory at the polls during the general elections. Reminding its readers that the *Abako* list had received, as a distinctive sign, the number 3, the editor of *Notre Kongo* went on to attribute the electoral success of his party to the magic properties of the number. Alluding to the symbolic relationships existing between the origins of the Kongo and the magic number, the author reached the conclusion that 'three has given us victory' and hence that 'God

¹ 'King Kasa, as he deserves to be called, is really a King, applauded by all peace-loving men, for when he demanded independence for the Kongo, he insisted on preserving the dignity and rights of the Kongolese people', *Notre Kongo*, 26 June 1960, p. 6.

² See *Kongo Dia Ngunga*, 31 December 1959.

³ The *Kodia*, meaning literally 'shell', was often

invoked in the course of 'judicial songs' (*nkunga mambu*) whenever a litigation of some sort arose. Its propitiating virtues were supposed to bring about the most favourable set of circumstances which could possibly be wished for.

⁴ *Notre Kongo*, 1 May 1960, p. 10.

and the memory of our ancestors have been a powerful help'.¹ A similar explanation was offered to account for the success encountered by the *Abako* in the boycott of the 1959 provincial elections which, in the eyes of its leaders, were merely meant to retard the accession of the Congo to self-government. As the polling date fell precisely on *Nsona-Nsona*, or the 'Ancestors' Day', such a coincidence was presumably an ill omen for the Belgian Congo administration and a presage of success for the *Abako*.²

Such illustrations should not be construed as an indication that official prediction and interpretation of political phenomena are exclusively based on traditional modes. Rather, they must be viewed as techniques used by the party elites to fortify the appeal of the *Abako*. Furthermore, since this appeal is directed to a specific social structure, they are highly symptomatic of the values shared by the Bakongo.

If, for the reasons previously mentioned, the objectives of the *Abako* have been characterized by pan-tribal aspirations with both a radical orientation and a traditionalist outlook, Bakongo society has—paradoxically enough—remained largely immune to the value changes which usually accompany the transition from a traditional to a modern environment.

FACTORS OF SOCIALIZATION

Among the factors which have most affected the traditional order, the impact of missionary activities and the spread of Western education deserve a high order of priority. Christian missions have been at the forefront of the European intrusion in the Lower Congo, both chronologically and instrumentally. Their proselytism was abundantly, and sometimes persuasively, criticized by various pamphleteers at the turn of the century. While it can hardly be denied that Christian missionaries have been largely responsible for the elimination of the rituals and customs which were part of the fabric of the traditional society and provided legitimate sanctions for its members,³ the positive role of the Church should not be completely overlooked. It must be noted at the outset that the most substantial source of information on the Bakongo society lies in the works, articles, and reports of Christian missionaries.⁴ Moreover, the participation of certain members of the clergy in such advisory organs as the *conseil colonial* and the *conseil de gouvernement* acted as an inducement for Belgian missionaries to acquire further information on the native societies located within their jurisdiction. Secondly, and largely because of their own needs arising out of evangelization, missionaries have considerably aided the maintenance and diffusion of the vernacular language. The publication of Kikongo dictionaries and the transla-

¹ 'Le numéro attribué aux listes Abako laissait augurer un résultat heureux. Oui, en ce jour de la Restauration le chiffre trois était le mieux désigner pour jouer un rôle digne de nous. Trois: Chiffre vraiment révélateur, car "makakua matatu malambe Kongo", trois termitières qui ont servi de support au pot dans lequel on a façonné le Kongo', *Notre Kongo*, 29 May 1960, p. 1.

² 'En 1959 le sort avait voulu que le jour des élections tomba [*sic*] un Nsona Nsona. Pour le peuple Kongolais c'est le jour du Sabbat, le jour du Seigneur, le jour des Ancêtres', *ibid.*

³ As noted by E. D. Morel, 'It is from [the missionaries] that has grown up the conviction . . . that nothing in the structure of African social life is worth preserving; that everything, indeed, is bad and corrupt and must be pulled down—tribal systems, communal tenure, marriage laws.' Cited by J. S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley, 1958), p. 105.

⁴ Fathers Van Wing, Philippart, and Laman, among others, have added considerably to our stock of knowledge on the Bakongo.

tion of biblical texts in Kikongo provided the first vehicles through which traditional concepts and values were disseminated among the Bakongo and communicated to the outside world. Thirdly, the Catholic Church, in contrast with the policies pursued by secular organizations, proceeded at a very early date to Africanize the clergy. The 'Mukongolization' of the clergy is evidenced by the large number of priests recruited among the Bakongo and by the fact that it was a Mukongo, Mgr. Kimbondo, who was the first African to be consecrated bishop in the former Belgian Congo. Finally, the prevalence of Scheutist missionaries in the Lower Congo area has also contributed to the growth of particularistic feelings among the Bakongo. Since the vast majority of Scheutist missionaries were of Flemish extraction, they tended to project their own experiences, as members of a linguistic and cultural minority, on those of the Bakongo. Hence the sympathy which has sometimes been displayed by members of the Flemish clergy towards the goals and aspirations of the Bakongo tribes.

All this explains the ambivalent attitude of the Bakongo elites towards the Catholic Church. While their attitude is often critical of the role played by the clergy, it is never vehement or hostile towards its members. A clear distinction is made between those members of the clergy who carried out their activities in close collaboration with the Belgian Government and those 'whose only concern was to serve God'.¹ Mindful of their audience, the leaders of the *Abako* have nevertheless been more favourably inclined towards the devotees of Simon Kimbangu than towards the followers of any other 'prophet'.² Yet the careful selection of candidates to the Assemblies, during the general election, seems to support the view that, for the *Abako*, the Church and the State are, and should remain, separate.³

Closely related to, and reflective of, missionary activities, Western education has been a powerful stimulant to the growth of nationalist assertions throughout the African continent. Considering the high percentage of literacy and the uniform system of education prevailing in the territories formerly subjected to Belgian tutelage, the present political orientation of the Bakongo seems paradoxical. Several factors account for the role played by the Bakongo intellectuals and their inability to move beyond the limits of a pan-tribal perspective.

One is the lack of opportunities offered to the products of post-primary schools to study abroad. In 1953 one African student was admitted for the first time to the University of Louvain. The precedent established by this bold initiative was followed on a very limited scale: five Congolese students were officially enrolled at Louvain for the academic year 1954-5; two more were admitted in the following year, and by 1958 a total of ten had registered for courses at Louvain. It was not until 1955 that a Congolese student was admitted to the Université Libre de Bruxelles, the second largest institution of higher learning in Belgium. By 1958 only three Congolese students attended the Université Libre. As for the third major university of Belgium,

¹ *Kongo Diets*, 28 February 1960, p. 6.

² See *Notre Kongo*, 27 December 1959, pp. 1-2.

³ Among the aspirants to election selected by the Central Committee of the *Abako* were Catholics, Protestants, and Kimbanguists, representing in equal proportion each of the three denominations. The list of candidates to the Lower Chamber reflected

the prominent place reserved to Kibanguists. But the intended effects of the proportional representation system were largely offset by the method of preferential voting through which the voters could alter the list order by casting his ballot for a candidate of his choice. See *Notre Kongo*, 1 May 1960, p. 2.

THE BASES OF NATIONALISM AMONG THE BAKONGO

the University of Liège, it did not include a single African student before 1958. Another explanatory factor lies in the small number of African students admitted to the institutions of higher learning located in the Congo. The enrolment figures to each of the two universities of the Congo—which were first established, respectively, in 1954 and 1956—indicate that higher education has thus far been available only to a small percentage of the African school population: by 1958 only eleven Congolese students had graduated from Lovanium.

TABLE II

*Number of Students Enrolled in Congolese Universities**

Year	University of Lovanium		University of Elisabethville	
	Africans	Non-Africans	Africans	Non-Africans
1954	30	3	none	none
1955	77	10	"	"
1956	122	47	8	86
1957	177	72	17	107
1958	248	117	44	155
1959	344	136	77	199

* Lovanium, unlike the University of Elisabethville, is a Catholic university, directly connected with Louvain. In each university, however, the curriculum associated with the *diplôme légal*, as distinguished from the *diplôme scientifique*, is uniformly controlled by the metropolitan Chambers.

Finally, post-primary education has been largely vocational in character. It did not provide, therefore, the degree of sophistication which is eventually acquired from exposure to a Liberal Arts education. As Lord Hailey perceptively noted: 'The Belgian policy may be said to assign to the African a different cultural future from that envisaged by the French, for it looks less to his association with European civilization than to his fuller development within the range of his own economic and social environment.'¹ This feature of Belgian educational policy is in part the result of the cultural heterogeneity of the Belgian nation itself. But it is also the logical consequence of the assumptions underlying paternalist policies. Assuming that political rights could safely and legitimately be denied as long as social and economic needs were properly met, the Belgian Government has been heavily involved in large-scale programmes of economic and social improvement. It has therefore endeavoured to lay a strong emphasis on the practical training necessary to the formation of medical assistants, agronomists, clerks, and the like.

The system of education applied in the Congo had two important consequences. One is that the general calibre of Congolese intellectuals is far below the level of their counterparts in British and French Tropical Africa and their numerical importance negligible when compared with that of the territories mentioned. This means in effect that very few among the educated elements of the Congolese population are in a position to transcend the perspective of their tribal context. Their scale of values is still conditioned by their native cultures. As a result few will feel and even less

¹ *An African Survey*, 2nd ed. (London, 1957), p. 1209.

THE BASES OF NATIONALISM AMONG THE BAKONGO

admit that they belong to a larger society than that which is co-terminous with their tribal boundaries. Another is that a considerable number of Congolese, eager to acquire the education which was otherwise denied to them, decided to attend the *grands séminaires* instituted by the Catholic Church for the purpose of training native priests. It may be that the adhesion of Congolese seminarists to the cause of militant nationalism was prompted by the more negative aspects of missionary activities. But it is also related to the fact that the priesthood was, until recently, the only avenue to higher education. Yet, it is among those seminarists who failed to reconcile the teachings of the Catholic Church with its actual role that the appeals of militant nationalism were the strongest. The leadership of the *Abako*, composed to a large extent of former seminarists, illustrates the point. The founder of the *Abako*, Mr. Nzeza-Nlandu, is himself a product of the *grand séminaire* of Mayidi, and its former Chairman, Mr. Kasa-Vubu, attended the *grand séminaire* of Kabwe from 1936 to 1939. Two other prominent personalities of the party, Messrs. Kingotolo and Yumbu, also attended at one time a *grand séminaire*.

The lack of perceptible social distance between the urbanized and rural segments of the Bakongo populations suggests that the impact of urbanization has had limited effects on the Bakongo society. Indeed, the acculturative forces affecting the Bakongo of Leopoldville and other urban areas did not prevent them from keeping in close touch, physically and culturally, with the Bakongo living in the bush. This is due in part to the fact that the traditional institutional structure of the Bakongo society provided the framework necessary to cushion the impact of modernity and preserve specific elements of the Bakongo's culture. The extended family structure implied a large measure of horizontal mobility between urban and rural areas and hence contributed to keep alive and strengthen social communication and kinship ties among the members of the same ethnic group.¹

Moreover, association by tribal affiliation afforded a mode of social organization which provided the Bakongo with a means of protection against the disruptive influences of urbanization. As noted earlier, the *Abako* was not a mere Mafia of militant nationalists; it also served as a focus of social and cultural activities. It offered a network of communications through which traditional symbols, customs, and beliefs were kept alive. As a result, and with the aid of periodicals published in Kikongo (*Ntetembo Eto* and *Kongo Dia Ngunga*, among others) it fostered an embryonic 'national' consciousness among its members. An organizational structure developed from its various co-ordinating and functional units, which eventually allowed its leaders to enlist and control the support of a large following. Mutual aid societies, co-operatives, scholarship committees, and similar associations were organized through the kinship and community system. While designed to perform different functions, they nevertheless proved to be highly serviceable instruments of political mobilization.

CONCLUSION

The form of organization on which the Bakongo have relied to attain emancipation from Belgian tutelage reflects a fundamental ambivalence in their political orientation. While a great many elements of the indigenous political structure have disappeared

¹ Cf. G. Balandier, *Sociologie des Brazzavilles Noires* (Paris, 1955), pp. 117-37.

through prolonged culture contacts, basic attitudes towards authority, social communication, and symbolic values have remained largely unchanged. Mere morphological observations are misleading. Behind the party bureaucracy, co-ordinating devices, electoral processes, parliamentary representation, &c., the carry-over of traditional political relations is apparent. The affirmation of a charismatic type of leadership is an obvious manifestation of the partial erosion of traditional norms and of the emotional disarray which results from anomic conditions. But it is also an attempt to recapture the nostalgic past of *Kongo Dia Ntotila*. The chiliastic qualities ascribed to 'King Kasa' suggest that he alone is in a position to command the loyalties of the Bakongo and to meet their expectations.

Résumé

LES BASES DU NATIONALISME CHEZ LES BAKONGO

CETTE contribution à l'étude des mouvements nationalistes au Congo ex-belge vise à mettre en lumière l'aspect ambigu des revendications politiques des populations Bakongo.

Leur réaction aux contraintes de la tutelle belge s'est initialement traduite par des manifestations spontanées souvent imprégnées de syncrétisme religieux. À une époque plus récente le particularisme tribal des Bakongo a pris la forme d'un mouvement politique organisé dont les buts s'inspirent directement du passé historique mukongo. L'aspect fondamental des techniques de mobilisation de l'Abako relève d'une fonction plus poétique que politique, qui est de rappeler aux Bakongo la grandeur passée du Royaume de San Salvador et de focaliser toutes leurs aspirations sur la réhabilitation de leur héritage culturel. Les mutations auxquelles fut soumise la société mukongo ont fortement ébranlé ses structures traditionnelles, mais l'existence d'un 'mythe' national (grandeur de Kongo Ntotila) a cependant survécu aux vicissitudes de l'époque coloniale. C'est précisément en s'emparant de ce 'mythe' et en le popularisant que les leaders de l'Abako ont réussi à le détourner à leur profit; d'abord en dirigeant les espoirs de libération et les désirs latents de leurs séides contre l'administration belge, puis en se proclamant les détenteurs légitimes du pouvoir. Ceci grâce à une manipulation habile de certains symboles d'autorité au niveau de la conscience collective tribale.

Mais cette technique de mobilisation a d'autre part été favorisée par des facteurs externes. Indépendamment de l'influence des normes traditionnelles, il faut aussi reconnaître que la politique de la Belgique en matière d'éducation a également contribué — principalement par omission — au maintien d'un cadre de références et d'une échelle de valeurs distincts. Il convient aussi de rappeler que l'évangélisation du Bas-Congo a permis aux missionnaires catholiques et protestants de se familiariser avec l'histoire du Royaume de San Salvador dès le 17^{ème} siècle. De ces contacts ont résulté traités et commentaires — souvent anecdotiques mais néanmoins révélateurs — dont la diffusion a assuré une large mesure de publicité à la culture, aux croyances et à l'histoire des Bakongo. Dans la mesure où ils firent acte de chroniqueurs, d'historiographes et d'imagiers, les missionnaires ont apporté un fondement de légitimité aux revendications des Bakongo.

Ces remarques expliquent pourquoi la Province de Léopoldville fut l'épicentre des mouvements nationalistes du Congo. Elles sont aussi destinées à ouvrir un aperçu sur les origines de la crise d'autorité qui sévit aujourd'hui parmi la population de l'ancienne colonie belge.

NOTES

The Turkana Age Organization

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THE Turkana are nomadic pastoralists, numbering about 80,000 people, who inhabit semidesert country in north-western Kenya. A general account of them has been published elsewhere (Gulliver 1951) and also a detailed analysis of their kinship and property systems (Gulliver 1955).

The aim of the present paper is to give a description of the structure and operation of their age organization, as my earlier account of this was incomplete and inadequate.¹ Because of the continued interest in and comparative discussion of age-groups, and also because current field research will almost complete the coverage of the Nilo-Hamitic peoples and their immediate Bantu neighbors in East Africa among whom age-group systems are notably important, it is thought useful to make available the data for the Turkana on which an adequate comparative study may draw. Therefore, the object here is description and initial analysis only. I do not wish to intrude theoretical or comparative considerations, which are to be left for a later and wider treatment than would be possible here. In any case, there have been two recent broader studies to which the reader should refer (Eisenstadt 1956; Prins 1953).

Initiation. Turkana youths are initiated into full formal adulthood at an average age of eighteen; the age limits vary in practice between about fourteen and twenty years. Initiation occurs by the youth spearing a male, castrated animal—ox, camel, goat, or sheep—at a communal ceremony which may last for several consecutive days or which may be renewed for a day or so at a time over a longer period. On each day a number of youths (up to as many as fifteen) present themselves, each with his animal provided by his father. After all the initiates on one day have speared their animals, the carcasses are opened and the head and body of each youth is smeared with the undigested contents of the stomach of his own beast and with the elders' spittle by the seniormost elders of the area. This is a normal Turkana method of ritual purification and strengthening employed on any occasion when an animal is ceremonially slaughtered. The important feature here is that the act is necessarily performed by the seniormost men in the age-group system, who are thought to be able to receive the initiates into that system and to pass on to them the attributes of strong manhood and the idealized qualities of age-group membership. After this act the slaughtered animals are cut up and the meat is cooked over open fires and eaten by all males at the initiation grove. No females are allowed to participate in any part of the affair, but uninitiated boys may be present and may eat the inferior pieces of meat.

At the end of the day each initiate separately goes off with a man of approximately his father's generation. The initiate goes to his "patron's" homestead and remains there for five days; he is expected to act as if he were

living at his own home rather than as a visitor. At the end of the period the initiate and his patron formally exchange spears, knives, sandals, and cloth, which act, say the Turkana, establishes and symbolizes the father-son relationship between the two men. Thereafter the young man refers to his patron as "father." He is finally given his first muddled headdress by his patron (Gulliver 1955: 113). The initiate thereafter returns home and takes up normal life.

The initiate's weapons and clothing are specially provided by his real father expressly for the exchange, but the initiate receives only the everyday possessions of his patron in return; and therefore the patron usually profits from the transaction. The patron is chosen by the initiate's father, who aims at creating a useful new pseudo-kinship bond with the man. About the time of initiation, sometimes before and sometimes after, the father makes the patron a gift of animals; ideally he should give at least one of each type of castrated male beast, but the actual gift varies according to the wealth of the father and the condition of other contemporary claims against his herds. Through this gift a type of "stock-association" is established both between the father and his son's patron and also between the son and patron. (Gulliver 1955: Chapter 8). In his choice of patron, therefore, a father seeks to obtain the consent of some unrelated man of dependable character with whom relations are likely to be fruitful in later years. Sometimes, but by no means necessarily, a father chooses one of his bond-friends. There is no customary requirement of particular age-group relationship between the two men, and cases were recorded where the patron was junior, equal, and senior to the father.

The patron must belong to the same alternation as the initiate (see below). He should provide a kind of parental responsibility, care, and assistance for the initiate not unlike a Christian godfather, but in fact the actual relationship which develops may vary a good deal. Like all interpersonal bonds in Turkana-land, the actual relationship depends on the exigencies of nomadic movements and the frequency of contacts over the years, and it may flower or wither according to personal preferences. In some cases the young man and his patron maintain little or no contact; in other cases a genuinely valuable association is maintained such that mutual assistance and gifts of livestock are made in times of need in the normal way of stock-association. Sometimes the young man also develops a bond-friendship with one of his patron's sons.

There is no significance claimed with regard to the type of animal which a youth spears at initiation. Although oxen and camels are more valuable economically and socially than are goats and sheep, the fact of spearing a larger animal affords no seniority or other credit to the initiate either then or afterwards. The rule is that a man's sons, as they come to the time of initiation, are provided alternatively with an ox or camel and a goat or sheep—the eldest son always takes an ox or camel. Sons come to initiation as their father considers them to be of age; in general this means that they come forward in order of birth, although that order may be slightly varied in accordance with an internal system of seniority based on placement in the mothers' groups

("yards") within the nuclear family (Gulliver 1955:131-32; also Gulliver 1953:154-56).

On initiation a youth joins the age-group then open; no further induction is made. After initiation the youth becomes a young man: he is able to wear a man's mudded headdress and to carry a man's weapons, to fight in war and to marry. In practice he will not be able to marry for several or many years, for that event depends not on initiation but on his position in his own nuclear family and the size of the family herds. The young man can also take part, albeit a minor part, in ritual activities such as are involved in rain-making, fertility ceremonies, curing illness, warding off epidemics and witchcraft, and so forth.

The alternations. Every male Turkana belongs to one of two groupings—Stones (*Ngumur*, s. *Imurut*)² and Leopards (*Ngirisai*, s. *Erisai*). These are referred to here as "alternations" because at birth every male child automatically becomes a member of that of his grandfather and not that of his father. Thus a Stone's sons are all Leopards, and vice versa. On the other hand, it is important to note that the two groupings do not refer to tribal generations, for they are coexistent among a crowd of males of the same age such that about half will belong to each. The alternations, with the same naming, exist throughout Turkanaland.

The alternations provide a basically social classification rather than physiological, so that a boy's placement depends on that of his legal father. Thus the son of an unmarried mother joins the alternation to which his mother's father (his pater) does not belong. If the woman marries later, the placement of her subsequent sons depends on the alternation of her husband (their pater). For example, a woman might have a son before marriage who becomes a Leopard because his mother's father is a Stone; and later sons become Stones because her eventual husband (whether or not the progenitor of the first son) is a Leopard. Women themselves are not included in these two categories and they may marry a man of either alternation. After marriage a woman is said, in a loose way, to belong to her husband's alternation just as, more genuinely and significantly, she becomes a member of his clan and family. The only importance it has for her is in the color of certain personal ornaments.

Connected with membership of alternations are rules prescribing the types of decorations that men may wear. Stones should only wear black ostrich plumes and dark-colored metal ornaments (rings, bracelets, anklets, and so forth); Leopards should wear only white ostrich plumes and light-colored metal ornaments, and they alone may wear leopard-skin cloaks. Without exception in 1948-50 men stated these rules, and most commonly they failed to observe them, so that it was generally impossible to identify a man's alternation by his decorations either in everyday life or on ceremonial occasions. Emley (1927) noted these same rules but he did not record whether they were actually observed. Turkana claim that they do observe them, but patently they do not. There are no sanctions compelling observance and no man suffers for neglect of them. The only rule which is rigidly followed concerns the color

of a wife's marital neck-ring which invariably is of the color appropriate to her husband's alternation. Emley also recorded that certain colors of beads and certain songs were reserved to each alternation, but no trace of this was found twenty years later.³

Invariably, if a group of men come together for some conscious purpose, they tend to separate into two groups according to their alternations. This is most clearly seen at feasts when the two groups sit slightly apart and cook their shares of meat over separate fires. This occurs not only at specifically ceremonial feasts but also when an animal is slaughtered just for meat for the immediate neighborhood. In earlier, war-like days, Turkana military attacks were normally mounted by a two-pronged assault, each prong composed of men of one alternation.

At initiation the youths of each alternation are dealt with separately, usually on different days but sometimes on the same days at separate but adjacent groves. Turkana see the existence of these alternations as a fundamental dichotomy throughout the tribes such that a youth's allocation to an age-group and his participation thereafter in specific age-group activities is unvaryingly guided by his natal affiliation—e.g., feasting, dancing, war-making, and ritual, as well as the more general feelings of association which produce attitudes of respect, assistance, and mutual support.

Although a man takes the alternation not of his father but of his grandfather, there is no claim to a special connection with the grandfather as there is among the related, neighboring Jie people (Gulliver 1955:250). Indeed, the rule is always formulated in terms of the father's alternation; it is the point of difference from the father which is here emphasized, for all men of whatever age of a single alternation think of themselves as associated together as against men of the other alternation. The two new age-groups which are established in any one initiation season, and which together comprise a total collection of coevals, do not find an especial common interest and mutuality, nor do they coalesce as a single age-class. Instead, each group tends to associate itself with its next senior group in the alternation, and in later life age-group membership gives way in part to the wider membership of the alternation. Young men tend to seek the advice and help and to accept the orders and restraints of the senior men of their own alternation, but they can ignore both counsel and control coming from the other group. There is a greater formality and conscious distinction between members of contemporaneous groups but of different alternations than there is between members of successive groups in a single alternation. An elderly Stone at a ceremony or dance would not give orders to a young Leopard, but he would expect and would normally obtain compliance and respect from a young Stone.

There is a fairly general notion that Stones are in some vague way senior (*luapolok*, the big ones) as an alternation to the Leopards. This idea was expressed in widely separated parts of the country, but no one could explain the reason for it, nor was there much if any significant difference in behavior, status, or privilege. On ritual occasions—for example, rain-making—elderly

Stones claimed to be more important than elderly Leopards and claimed to lead communal supplications to the High God and to receive meat first, but in fact there appeared to be no essential observation of such difference between the two groups at these times.

Age-groups. Normally in each initiation year two new age-groups (*alhepan* or *arek*)⁴ are created, one in each alternation. The Turkana say that initiation only occurs in a good wet season; that is, when the rainfall is above the meager average and is adequately distributed, and when there is sufficient grass in the plains to permit all the cattle herds to leave the mountains. Heads of nuclear families and their wives are then able to live with their cattle in the plains⁵ and there is a relative abundance of milk, butter, fat, and meat. It is likely, too, that the tiny, scattered plots of sorghum will produce a fair harvest so that porridge may temporarily be added to the feasts. Thus food is plentiful; people are able to relax and to be hospitable and the herds prosper. Turkana say that they cannot dance and rejoice with empty stomachs, and in fact almost no major social gatherings are held in the dry season and only a few in a poor wet season.

Turkana say that a good wet season (March to July) occurs about once in four or five years. Reasonable rainfall figures are available only for Lodwar, Central Turkana land: for the thirty years, 1922 to 1951, the average annual fall was 5.75 inches and there were eight "good" seasons at an average interval of 3.75 years (Gulliver 1952 b: Fig. 4). Some of these statistically "good" seasons were in fact poor because of maldistribution of rain, and therefore they were not adequate to become initiation seasons. At least one good season (1947) followed so closely on the preceding one (1945) that it was not made a new initiation season. Turkana say that when, exceptionally, two good years are consecutive or separated by only one other year, the new age-group created in the first year can be continued during the second year. In fact, in that period of thirty years five new groups were begun at an average interval of six years. The actual period varied, of course, being entirely dependent on rainfall.

In the more favored (north-western) areas of the country where average rainfall is higher, there tend to be rather more good years which are only partly offset by a group running for more than a single season; in such areas there are usually one or two more groups in existence. In general, however, there are between eight and ten groups with living members in each alternation. This gives a range of fifty years or a little more, which, together with the average initiation age of about eighteen years, puts the age of the oldest men at about seventy years. In my experience, exceedingly few Turkana live beyond the approximate age of seventy years in this hard country, and there is a notable scarcity of men much over sixty years of age.

The general rule is, then, that an age-group comprises the men initiated in a single wet season (toward the end of the season usually). Individual initiation gives automatic entrance to the current group without any subsequent ceremony. There is neither opening nor closing of the group as such. The initiates of one year are given a name and their group takes its place in the

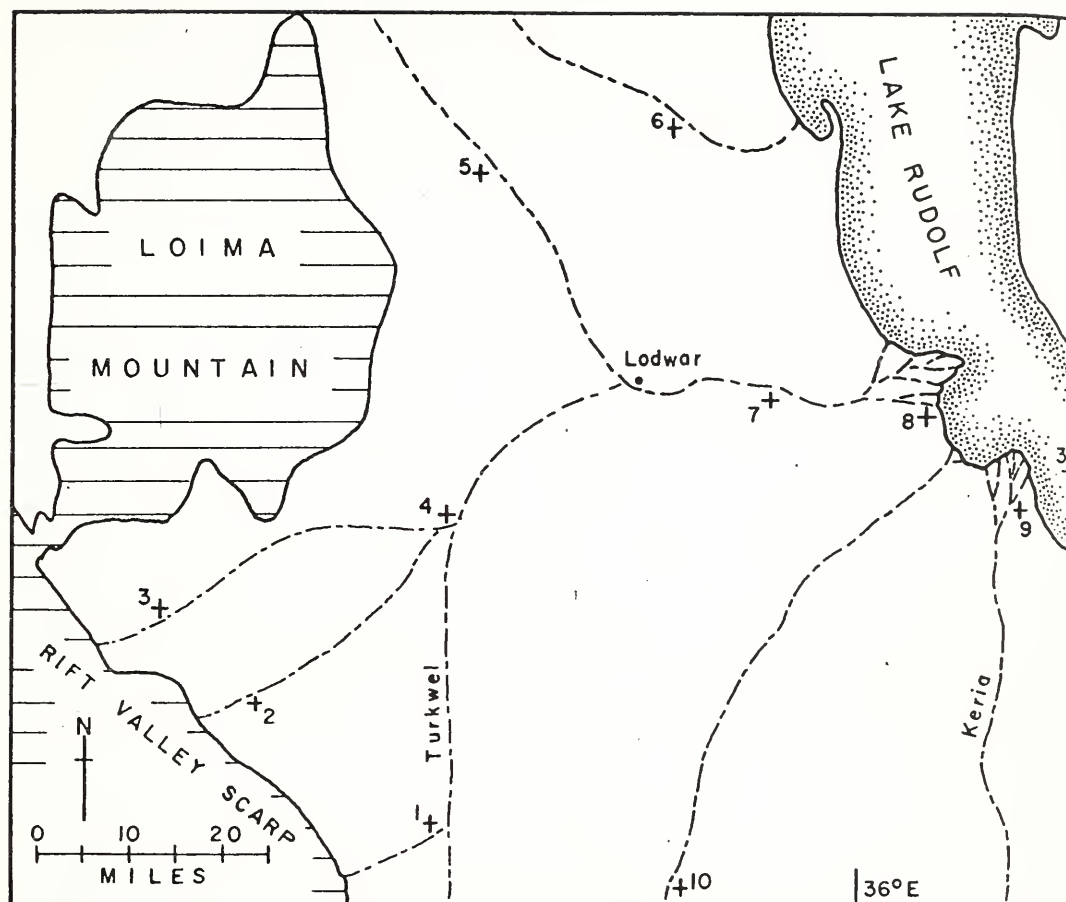
total series of groups. There is no equation between a group's position in the total series at any time and any social function, distinction, privilege, or responsibility held by its members severally or corporately. For example, there are no warriors' or elders' grades.

A member of the newest group is a "man" in the general sense; in earlier days, he was a "warrior" only because he was a young man and not because of his membership in that group. His own development as a social person is an individual matter depending upon his place in his father's nuclear family, the time and nature of his marriage and his inheritance, and the evolution of his own nuclear family. Imperceptibly "a man" (*ekile*) becomes an "old man" (*ekasiko*), and this too is largely an individual matter. It is a relative status; he is an old man compared with his juniors and in reference to some affair such as dancing, fighting, or ceremonial performance. At an initiation ceremony the only "old men" are the members of the most senior extant group, but at a dance the "old men" are all those who do not take a very active part. On one occasion a person is an "old man," and on another he is not; the designation does not necessarily refer to his age-group membership, for some men retain their physical powers and continue an active life longer than their age-mates. At no time does a group reach the grade of "old men," although certain groups may at times be regarded as such.

The diffusion of age-group names. Initiation ceremonies are held at certain conventional centers scattered through the country, and a man takes his son to the center nearest his wet season homestead. These centers are not absolutely fixed, although their localities are fairly definite. Because it is essential that members of the most senior extant group attend the ceremonies and purify and bless the initiates and supervise the distribution of meat, the actual choice of the site for a center depends to some extent on the location of their homesteads, for they cannot be expected to make long journeys in their aged infirmity. Sometimes in a good year an area may not be able to hold an initiation because none of these seniormost men are living there at the time, and the youths and their fathers will be compelled to travel to the nearest center available. Fathers will attempt to arrange their nomadic movements so that their homesteads are reasonably near to an operative center where their sons may attend for initiation. Nevertheless, most centers operate in a good wet season, for these seniormost men are quite equitably distributed among the regions of numerous population. The accompanying sketch map shows the approximate locations of the initiation centers in central Turkana land, and demonstrates the nature of their geographical distribution.

Past initiation centers retain no special significance. The actual site (*akireket*) is a convenient group of shady trees near to a watering point.

Each center is independent and the arrangement and timing of the ceremonies is the responsibility of the interested people in the area, i.e., fathers of youths to be initiated, influential senior men, and the seniormost age-group. Initiation occurs on several days and each day a number of youths, up to as many as fifteen, present themselves and their male animals. Although the



Sketch map of Central Turkaneland, showing rough locations of initiation centers. These centers are numbered for reference purposes only, and are in no special order. Positions are approximate, and actual locations may vary slightly from one initiation season to another.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Koteruk river | 6. Kalokwel river |
| 2. Lorengagipi river | 7. Lower Turkwel river |
| 3. Logiriana | 8. Turkwel delta |
| 4. Lorungumu | 9. Kerio delta |
| 5. Kagwelasi river | 10. Upper Lokicar river |

Shaded areas indicate high land, much of which comprises dry season cattle pasture. Dotted lines indicate main rivers, but there is a flow of water, intermittently, only in the wet season.

question of the name to be given to the new initiates is mooted before the first of these days no decision will have been reached. During the ceremonies the matter is freely discussed by all the men present, and a name is finally agreed upon.

A name that has ever been used before may not be used again; this is said to be most important. It emphasizes the newness of the group, say the Turkana, and to the observer it appears to indicate that the group takes its place in the unending stream of groups in such a way that it has no direct relationship to any other group, extinct or existing, except in the total order of groups chronologically determined.

Men will propose names for consideration by their fellows. For instance, one man may suggest a name evocative of a recent notable event—the Locusts group commemorates a locust plague, and “Those of the grass and water” notes a particularly good wet season. Another man may claim a revelation from the High God in a dream—and such a name may be anything in the realm of nature. The arrival and establishment of the British have produced the Swahili and the Shillings groups. The name of the animal speared by the seniormost initiate may be used. These sorts of suggestions are freely discussed until a general consensus is reached. This is a completely informal process and there is no recognized leader who might control the proceedings. Men of the seniormost groups appear to have no special privilege in the matter, but when the name is finally determined these oldest men formally tell the initiates, who have remained aside taking no part.

Thus at each center two new names are agreed upon; but in fact age-group names are usually the same over wide regions containing several centers, and one or two names are to be found almost throughout the country. The whole region shown on the map has a majority of common names. It sometimes happens that, at a center where initiation begins late, men hear of names already decided on at another center and merely follow suit. The possibilities of this are not too great and can probably never occur between centers a hundred or more miles apart.⁶ Also, a particularly outstanding event may occasionally precipitate the same name at several centers—the Locusts group is a probable example. Thus in the initial stage there are an indefinite number of new names emanating from the twenty-five to thirty initiation centers in the country.

There begins a haphazard, wholly informal process of exchange of information and views, resulting in the beginnings of adjustment. During the normal migratory movements, visiting and traveling, men learn the new names which have been chosen at other centers. In earlier days the newly initiated men came together over wide areas for dancing, feasting, hunting, and raiding, but there is little of this nowadays. I have never heard of special meetings for the purpose of discussing the matter, but any gathering for whatever reason serves as an occasion for this. Men initiated at one center will gradually begin to discard their original name and to adopt that of another center which appears to be more popular, more apt, or more successful. Older men begin to refer to

the youngest men by this other name. This kind of slow adjustment to uniformity is lengthy and uncoordinated, and at some stages men from the same center will be individually referring to their group by different names, as will their seniors. This does not really cause confusion, as the Turkana are aware of the process in operation and therefore expect temporary differences.

There appears to be no determinate geographical or social route along which the diffusion of names travels: an examination of the process for the names of more junior age-groups reveals no common pattern. It is clear, however, that certain centers are allowed a degree of superiority such that men from other centers are inclined to follow their lead. For example, Turkana from the central Turkwell river area have colonized the country to the west, following the withdrawal of the Karamojong some 50 to 60 years ago. Centers in this new country (Numbers 2 and 3 on the map) are inclined to follow the lead of the center in the old country (Number 1). This center also holds a certain degree of superiority because the people who conventionally spend the wet season there are generally more wealthy in livestock and more influential than their easterly neighbors in the drier, poorer, more sandy central Turk-analand. A center near the locality of an important rain-maker (and, formerly, an important war-leader) may hold superiority for a period because of the reflected prestige and authority of such a man and because the names decided at these centers are likely to become more widely known. Formerly, a stimulus to accept the name of one center could be given, I was told, by a notably successful raid by its initiates.

The process continues for several years. Turkana say that for each new group the process will eventually be completed, so that for the whole country there is a single, agreed name in general use. This is not true in fact, as is shown by a comparison of lists of names of groups used in different parts of the country (Gulliver 1951:261-62). Nevertheless, a degree of uniformity is achieved which, if not tribe-wide, is extensive. Some names are more widespread than others, although no reason can be adduced for this. For example, there is no difference of uniformity for pre-European names and for more modern ones (i.e., before and after about 1918). Men declare that adjustment goes on indefinitely so that even the names of older groups can be changed, but this seems unlikely. Reference to the names of groups of men aged about 40 to 50 years in central Turk-analand produced fair recognition among people in north-western Turk-analand, but questioning elicited a declared determination not to alter names at that stage.

Not unnaturally, differences are greatest the farther apart two areas are. Such general regions as the north-west, the north-east, the center, and the south show considerable but by no means complete uniformity. For some reason not understood, the names in the Stones alternation show a greater uniformity than those in the Leopards, although no Turkana seemed to be aware of this until it was pointed out to them. Indeed, most Turkana, who are parochially minded despite their nomadism, assert that all names everywhere are the same

as those used in their own region, and it was not until I had recorded lists of name for many regions that I realized that their statements were untrue, although as an assertion of the ideal they may be correct enough.

One other point is worth mentioning: occasionally a name applies to groups which in different areas are of different seniority. This does not seem to contravene the rule that a new group must be given an entirely new name, though it would appear obvious that the more junior group must have obtained this name through knowledge of the more senior one elsewhere.

This imperfect process of the diffusion of age-group names is significant in two ways. First, it indicates the common tribal feeling of a single, uniform system for the whole country. There is extremely little mechanism of social integration in this nomadic tribe, wherein territorial allegiance is nominal and where there are neither significant encompassing groups such as lineages nor institutionalized political leaders or officials. In spite of this, and despite their permanently nomadic life, the Turkana do express strong emotional feelings concerning the unity and homogeneity of their tribe. The willingness to give up an age-group name and to adopt that of another center, and the general insistence that uniformity of names is eventually attained (untrue in fact) are part of this. Second, we note the absence of a formal social mechanism for obtaining uniformity, together with the absence of specific age-group leaders, or leading elders, who might be responsible for this.

The following list of age-group names for each alternation in west-central Turkanaland is given as an example of the sorts of names chosen. It will be noted that there are eight groups extant, and this number is a direct result of the relative infrequency of good wet seasons in that region. The names are given in order of seniority, starting with the eldest in each alternation.

<i>Stones</i>		<i>Leopards</i>	
<i>Ngkwalitom</i>	(Elephant's tusks)	<i>Ngimethcth</i>	(Locusts)
<i>Ngitapino</i>	(Guinea-fowl)	<i>Nggerowc</i>	(Buck)
<i>Ngimericada</i>	(Fur leg-circlets)	<i>Ngicodomethckin</i>	(Lame sheep)
<i>Ngimerithie</i>	(Spotted leopards)	<i>Ngikapilikwara</i>	(Spear shafts)
<i>Nginyagipor</i>	(Grass and water)	<i>Nginyangardung</i>	(Grass and erdung trees)
<i>Ngwaria</i>	(Small rain-pools)	<i>Ngiblekwara</i>	(Broken spears)
<i>Ngilingakori</i>	(Goats with red heads and white bodies)	<i>Ngiriokumu</i>	(Black stones)
<i>Ngukwakora</i>	(White he-goats)	<i>Ngisalc</i>	(Swahili)

The principle of seniority. There is a scale of seniority running imperfectly through a single alternation, but scales for each alternation are not comparable at any point. Groups are placed in chronological order so that the older are more senior. Within each group there is a ranking of members which is defined by the order of seniority of members' legal fathers. At any one initiation ceremony, this order is strictly followed and demonstrated in practice by the

order in which initiates spear their animals; but it can, at least theoretically, be determined as between any two men of the same group irrespective of where they have been initiated.

Fathers of initiates are not all members of the same age-group, but are drawn from the four or five most senior groups in the total series. Thus the initiate-sons of members of the seniormost (or first) age-group are automatically senior to sons of members of the second group, who are again senior to sons of members of the third group. Among initiates who are sons of members of a single age-group, seniority depends directly on the relative seniority of their fathers in that set. Thus the greater the age gap between father and son the higher the seniority of the son within his own age-group; the smaller the gap the lower the seniority of the son. Elder sons are therefore in relatively junior positions in their groups and younger sons are relatively senior. But, of course, elder sons still remain senior to their younger brothers in the total series in the alternation.

In each case the initiate-son's position in his section of the new group is determined by his father's position relative to the fathers of age-mates. This information is usually known at a particular initiation center or, by discussion, it can be determined by the older men present. When it cannot be determined, recourse is had to divination by throwing sandals, a technique known to many Turkana. Similarly, if it is later necessary to establish relative seniority between two age-mates, the same process of discussion and final recourse to divination is followed.

Under this system sons cannot benefit from the wealth or prestige of their fathers to gain high seniority positions. It is also certain that, whether or not a man has high seniority in his own age-group, his elder sons will be only junior in theirs; but, on the other hand, high seniority of a father will give a high ranking to his youngest sons in their groups. I do not think that this result is consciously intended or even appreciated by the Turkana; youngest sons are not preferentially treated in other social fields, and in general they have an unenviable position in the queue for bridewealth animals, inheritance, and the like. Finally, the determination of an initiate's seniority has no connection with his character, ability, physique, and so forth. Even order of birth (where it is known) has no relevance as between age-mates of different fathers.

Ecology and the age-group. The structure of the age-group system has been described in the first sections of this paper, and it is now necessary to understand its operation and significance in the social life of the Turkana. Before this is possible, however, it is necessary to mention very briefly the essential ecological limitations on social organization and on age-groups in particular.

The Turkana are nomadic pastoralists inhabiting semidesert plains where rainfall averages no more than 15 inches a year and less than six inches in the center and east. There are a few scattered mountains where rainfall is rather better and where permanent grass of a kind is found. The cattle herds follow a transhumance between mountains (dry seasons) and plains (wet seasons), while camels, goats, and sheep move slowly around in the plains throughout the

year. Human habitation is nowhere permanent. More importantly for this paper, no residential groups are permanent. Men whose homesteads comprise a neighborhood at one time do not necessarily move together and there is a constant process of coalescence and dispersion as heads of nuclear families shift their herds as they individually see fit. Although a middle-aged man will normally have established a general routine of annual movements, the details of actual location and timing vary considerably from year to year as a result of varying rainfall and personal inclination. All land is common pasturage. Thus the men who comprise a wet season neighborhood group will scatter gradually and join in a number of neighborhoods during the following dry season; in the next wet season, although most or all of them may return to the same region as before, they do not necessarily make up a single neighborhood again. A few kinsmen or friends may move more or less together for a period of months or even years, but inevitably they will separate sooner or later as disagreements occur over decisions to move or in personal relations. Sons do not normally adopt the same pastoral routines as their fathers. Close agnates often deliberately develop different routines from each other (Gulliver 1955: Chapter 2 and *passim*).

The effects of such pastoral-social anarchy are decisive in the nature and operation of the Turkana age-group system. Youths who are initiated together at one center in a good wet season must usually go to the mountain grasslands with the cattle herds in the dry season, but age-mates may well be scattered over a range of 100 miles or more. When wet seasons are poor they may get no opportunity to descend to the plains again; when wet seasons are fair or good they do not necessarily return with the cattle to the same plains locality as before, and even if they do, some of them may be detached to herd camels, goats, and sheep elsewhere as required by the state of the family labor force at the time. As the young men mature, marry, inherit their own herds, and become heads of their own nuclear families, they gradually develop their own annual routines without particular regard for the contemporary evolution of their age-mates. Their good wet season regions may or may not coincide with those of their fathers, and therefore may or may not include their initiation center.

In the course of their movements as dependent sons or independent family heads, men continually become temporary neighbors of age-mates initiated at other centers.

Thus there is not and cannot be any specific corporate unity of an age-group based on a single initiation center or a single region. Similarly, there can emerge no more or less permanent clusters of age-mates (parts of an age-group) which might normally meet together in corporate activities. Instead, wherever they are at the time, men tend to associate with their temporary neighbors of the same age-group in any activity in which age-group alignment occurs. It is most important to appreciate this point because in Eastern Africa the usual age-group, or some definite section of it, is a corporate group with recognized, stable leaders or functionaries.

The operation of the seniority principle. On any occasion when several members of the same age-group meet together, one of their number will be recognized as the seniormost and he will automatically be allowed superior privilege and will be expected to assume ad hoc leadership. For example, he will distribute the group's share of meat to his juniors and will retain the better pieces for himself. He will tend to act as spokesman of that temporary collection of age-mates in relations with members of other age-groups who are present, or before a diviner or other prominent man. At least initially, he leads his age-mates in group singing and dancing. But he has only a purely temporary status of *primus inter pares*, and in practice he may be superseded by a more forceful although junior age-mate.

The whole of an age-group never meets together, for that would, by Turkana theory, necessitate the assembly of age-mates from the whole of Turkanaland. Neither, as we have already seen, are all men initiated at a single center likely to reassemble in later years as a single group. Thus age-groups have a corporate quality only insofar as men tend to think of themselves and their age-mates, known and unknown, as a body distinct from other groups. In practice all age-group activities are conducted by ad hoc collections of members of a group who happen to live in an area at the time. Similarly, seniority is a relative matter: on one occasion a man may be the seniormost, and at another time he may be subordinated. The principle of seniority invariably affords a method of ranking such that it permits the automatic selection of a leader, and it provides for an orderly distribution of privileges and duties as required. Thus it is an invaluable mechanism for the guidance of the social conduct of these temporary collections of men.

The operation of the mechanism is best exemplified at a meat feast. After dividing into alternations, the men sit in separate age-group clusters. The men of the most junior group skin and cut up the slaughtered animal, fetch wood, tend the fires, and roast the meat under the supervision of men of more senior groups. If several age-groups are present, each is allocated pieces of meat by men of the seniormost group acting under their senior-man. The meat of each group is then distributed to the members in order of seniority by their senior man. The more senior age-groups, and again the more senior members of each group, retain the better pieces of meat for themselves. There are two special pieces which are ceremonially cut off the carcass first by the seniormost man present; these are the *emacher* (testicles and surrounding meat) and *apol* (side of loins). These are cooked separately, first, and eaten by the two or three most senior men present.⁷ During or after the eating there are usually communal invocations to the High God, led principally by the most senior man present, and by the seniormost member of each age-group (except the more junior ones).

The most senior members of a junior age-group have no special powers attaching to them, for their occasions of leadership are irregular and temporary. As a group becomes more senior within the extant series, its most senior members begin to acquire certain mystic powers and qualities which are of a more permanent nature. These attach to a few men who are continually seen to be

seniormost in collections of age-mates. By the time an age-group has reached first or second place in the series, these few men are accredited with a special relationship to the High God from whom these qualities come, of such nature that they can obtain his assistance, learn his wishes, and understand how to gain his support for the people. This relationship is thought to result directly from the gradually acquired seniority, for it is believed that the High God would not deign to communicate with lesser men. Certainly there is no specific nor conscious act by which these seniormost men obtain their new power. Such men are therefore preferred leaders of ritual activity and communal invocations.

There are a few specialists or diviners (*imuron*, pl. *ngimurok*) who have much closer contact with the High God and who, though members of age-groups, do not in any way owe their powers to such membership. They control rain-making, important divination, and important ritual performances; they are believed to be able to cure illness and defeat witchcraft through their ability to tap the omniscient power of the High God. The seniormost members of the seniormost age-groups do not attempt to compete with these diviners, for the powers acquired by ordinary men by seniority are less precise and more pervasive.

Seniormost men are thought to have the power to uphold and enforce the moral and legal standards of the tribe. They can, it is claimed, stop fights by stepping between combatants, who dare not harm them on pain of punishment by the High God and by practical penalization by these seniors. Such a seniormost man can insist on arbitration, conciliation, and the restoration of amity, and he should initiate, though not take part in, these proceedings. He should intervene when kinsmen quarrel lengthily, when husband and wife are estranged, and when age-groups wrangle over a long period—that is, where conflict is prolonged and socially disruptive. The seniormost men do not act in any way as judges in a dispute; under self-help, the parties to the disputes and their associates are responsible. Nevertheless, the old men, speaking *ex cathedra* as it were, can state the moral and legal norms relative to the situation and they may even be appealed to for determination of a point at issue when there is an impasse between disputants. These men are regarded as the repositories of tribal morality and law, and their pronouncements have a sacrosanct quality.

These special, mystic powers must not be over-emphasized. Many disputes are settled without intervention by seniormost men, and many others continue unsettled despite such intervention. These men are frequently too infirm to leave their homesteads very often; they tend to become too frail to interest themselves greatly in other men's affairs, and their mental powers weaken, depriving them of their practical ability to act as mentors to their fellow tribesmen. Turkana themselves tend verbally to exaggerate the authority and social value of their seniormost men in a way which falls short of actual usage.

Age-group activities. As may be expected, the noncorporate character of Turkana age-groups provides a general and pervasive rather than a specific

influence in social life. Although, as already noted, there is a conscious feeling of amity and similarity of interests, problems, and desires among members of an age-group, this is naturally limited by the irregularity of its expression in concrete activity and by the ephemeral collections of age-mates (i.e., members of a single age-group) who are involved at any time.

Primarily, the age-group system and its concomitant seniority principle provide a well-known mechanism for the ordering and grouping of men at any social event in which more than a handful of them are engaged. This point may be reemphasized in view of the nature of this tribal society where face-to-face relations are impermanent and where there are neither institutionalized public leaders nor universal patterns of alignment and integration such as are elsewhere provided by large kin-groups, politico-territorial groupings, and so forth.

What has been said so far refers mainly to social activities of a specific nature, such as rain-making, marital and family ritual, ritual defense against human and animal epidemics and recurrent misfortune, and, of course, initiation itself. From time to time, however, and particularly in the wet season when men feel able to relax and to enjoy the relative abundance of food, members of a single age-group who happen to live in the same area will come together merely to feast, sing, and dance—"to play" as the Turkana put it. In the dry season work is harder, involving long journeys driving the stock to water and greater care in herding; the animals are in poorer condition and thus yield less milk, and less meat and fat when slaughtered. Nevertheless, even then age-mates occasionally seek to relieve the stark monotony by arranging a feast, and to relieve their yearning for meat. A number of age-mates collect, probably at or near a watering point when work is over, and agree to beg an animal from one of their number. The actual begging is done by conventional group-singing and dancing directed at the man in question. They follow him to his homestead or herd and continue until the request is granted. In general, a man is chosen who is not too poor in stock and who is thought not to have given an animal for a long time in these circumstances; poor men are seldom importuned. Once the man has been selected, it is most unlikely that he can evade his age-mates. He may not be too unwilling and therefore agrees after a show of reluctance; but he may well have plans or obligations which make him most unwilling. In any case, it is rare for him to escape, and Turkana say that in cases of extreme obduracy the men would enter the kraal and seize an animal by force. I have heard of threats of this but have no record of it happening. Nevertheless, the group-begging may go on all day and be resumed the next day until success is achieved.

This kind of begging, which occurs only among men of one age-group, can result in any ox or camel being slaughtered, but there is a special case where bell-oxen are involved. Every man has one or more special oxen with trained horns and with bells attached to leather collars around their necks. There is a psychic relationship between a man and his bell-ox which gives it a particular importance. Such an ox should not die a natural death, especially of old age, and when it begins to grow old it is ceremonially slaughtered by its owner's

age-mates. Commonly, when it is seen to be ageing, the age-mates take the initiative and beg the animal, although they would not normally do this while the ox is still prime. None but age-mates may join in the subsequent feast.

At such feasts, except these involving a bell-ox, men of other age-groups may attend and will be given meat. The seniormost one or two men of the age-group will distribute the meat and will consume the two ritual pieces. The seniormost age-mate will lead an invocation to the High God in which the owner of the slaughtered animal is specially remembered. Junior age-mates will collect firewood, tend to the fires, and so forth; slightly more senior ones will attend to the butchery. Afterward, at least in the wet season, there is singing and dancing—a specifically group performance in contrast to the everyday individual forms. It appears to an outsider that the integrative effects, the sense of communion and of belonging to the age-group, are highly accentuated by the emotional and physical impact of the group-dancing as the men rhythmically stamp and move together in a tight bunch, singing and miming as they go. In my experience, the Turkana are notably inarticulate but they do talk of feelings of great pleasure and of their sense of unity on these occasions.

On the special occasions of meeting peacefully with foreigners—members of other tribes and European officers—for formal discussions, the Turkana tend to present themselves in age-group formation rather than as an undifferentiated body. Again, when men of an area go to attend a wedding, dance, or initiation ceremony at some distance away, they usually go in separate groups of age-mates and there is often a dramatic arrival at the event as such a group storms into the homestead, grove, or other meeting ground, dancing and chanting and brandishing spears and clubs.

These sorts of activities principally affect the younger men, for older men seldom dance, except for a slow, formal walk around the younger men who actively dance in the center. But older men hold ad hoc feasts and they retain their group alignments at ceremonies. The older a man becomes the more often will he be among the few seniormost and thus have to assume temporary leadership at local events when perhaps ten or more men may be present. That is to say, older men are more engaged and more concerned with the arrangement and administration of these larger-scale social activities.

Marriage and its preliminaries bring age-group membership into play. During efforts to gain the agreement of the girl's father to the marriage, and thereafter during bridewealth discussions, the suitor seeks the support of his locally resident age-mates. They may sometimes act as his spokesmen, and they are his best witnesses. If "marriage by seizure" occurs, the suitor obtains the assistance of his age-mates to abduct the girl and keep her hidden safely until her father accedes to the fait accompli. The physical support of as large a number of age-mates as possible is necessary at this time in order to protect the suitor from the wrath of the girl's agnates, and fights are not uncommon between the two parties. Whichever type of preliminary occurs, discussion or abduction, the wedding is similar and the groom arrives and moves about in the

company of age-mates. They share with his close agnates the drive and final spearing of the marriage-ox in the homestead of the bride's father. For an older man his marriage supporters are drawn more from his kinsmen than from his age-mates, but the latter are by no means ignored. Should an older man resort to marriage by seizure, he usually persuades a group of men of a younger age-group to do the deed for him, providing a beast for them to slaughter afterwards.

Military organization. Formerly, and until the final pacification of the Turkana between 1910 and 1926, age-groups were of military importance. Raids could be initiated by regional groups of age-mates and, as in all male activities, men were grouped by age-group during operations.

Local members of a young man's age-group often came together as already described, and at such a time the idea of a raid would be mooted and perhaps tentative plans laid. News would be carried around by the age-mates and other age-groups might join in until large numbers of men began to assemble at a convenient point—usually near the homestead of a war-leader or diviner.

Whenever new age-groups were established, the new adult men would set about working up enthusiasm for a raid, for it was a point of honor that initiates should go on a raid as early as possible. There was the desire to prove one's self a man and to take advantage of the new privilege of warriorhood. Raids were also initiated by war-leaders and diviners.

The raiding party sorted out into alternations and age-groups, and moved off in that order with the seniormost groups leading in each half. The seniormost men of each age-group were theoretically responsible for leading their fellows, but because seniority has no connection with character, prowess, or ambition, the seniormost were apparently often subordinated to more junior men. The actual raid was invariably made by a two-column attack, with each alternation forming a column. Captured stock and humans were taken by the more junior age-groups, while the more senior formed a rearguard in the flight back to Turkanaland. Of course this is a somewhat formalized account of actual events which would surely have been more confused, irregular, and disorganized. Nevertheless, age-groups were expected to keep together, to give mutual support, and to rally together. Age-mates would endeavor to regroup as soon as possible during the return journey.

During the celebrations after a successful raid, age-group configuration was particularly dominant in the feasting, dancing, boasting, and general roistering. Rivalry was strongly stimulated and age-mates partook of each other's military successes through powerful in-group feelings. Clashes between age-groups were not uncommon, according to my informants; but I failed to enquire about the structural lines of such conflict.

Warfare and raiding is now almost entirely ended, though there are still occasional minor raids and affrays against neighboring tribes,⁸ especially against those to the north and east which are only loosely administered, or when poor rains provoke intertribal quarrels over water and pastures. The last major fighting occurred no more than thirty years before my field research, and all

the older men had taken part. There was a temporary recrudescence during World War II, when irregular battalions of Turkana were raised to fight against Italian-administered tribes in Ethiopia. Warfare, then, still remains a vivid memory with the Turkana and it was one of the few topics on which they would talk without restraint to an outsider. Its compulsory ending has inevitably weakened the age-group system and the bonds between age-mates, not only by removing a prime *raison d'être* of the system but also because no longer do age-mates find that former intensity of group feeling which accompanied warfare and its aftermath.

The significance of the system. For the individual man the age-group system means, first, initiation into formal manhood so that thereafter he may rightfully be a warrior carry a man's accoutrements, and wear a man's headdress; he may marry, participate in communal ritual, and in general act and speak as a man. Of course, initiation is not necessarily connected with an age-group system, though such a system usually contains some specific form of it. For the Turkana, at any rate, initiation and age-groups are so closely bound together that they comprise a single social organization. Initiation leads to membership in an age-group and such membership necessarily implies the completion of initiation.

Second, therefore, the system allocates to a man his membership in a group of coevals, gives him a placement in that group, and thus a determinate status in relation to all other men in the tribe. That is to say, it affords him a relationship to his fellow tribesmen in a society in which kinship, political, legal, and territorial institutions are weakly developed or at least have only a limited range of operation. Wherever a man goes in the course of nomadic pastoral movement or in traveling, he finds men who are his age-mates, comrades, and supporters. He finds also his seniors and juniors to whom he can fairly easily adjust his attitudes and behavior. He can never become socially isolated.

Third, by membership in a specific age-group, a man has a range of equals (although internally such men also are graded and placed) with whom he can join in group activities outside the narrow range of his own particular field of direct, personal, enduring relationships based on agnatic, maternal, and affinal kinship and bond-friendship. Because of the indeterminacy of nomadic routines and the absence of permanent or even semipermanent neighborhood groups, a man is commonly separated from men with whom he has specific personal relations. Sometimes a few live near him, and sometimes others; sometimes there may be none at all. But always there will be some age-mates in his neighborhood who will combine with him in social activities. Moreover, they combine in certain essentially masculine activities such as feasting, dancing, ritual, and, formerly, warfare.

Looking at the obverse of the coin, society as a whole, men are grouped together for certain important activities and connected in a coherent system by regulated links. They are drawn out of their small circles of specifically individual relationships into a wider sphere. A mesh of links is established between all the many small collectivities of individuals, and these links, though

singly weak and tenuous, are in total strong, valuable, and integrative. They help to give form to purely temporary neighborhood groupings in alliance with economic and pastoral cooperation.

The chronological series of age-groups and the seniority principle assist the organization of public activities in the absence of institutionalized leaders and permanent large groups—e.g., ritual, warfare, feasting, dancing, the public enunciation of law and morals. They give form to an otherwise atomistic, disintegrate society.

As already noted, age-groups are not corporate bodies and membership in a group only affords participation in local, ad hoc collectivities of age-mates who come together and combine in special activities, and who temporarily find new and wider relationships within their current neighborhood. Thus the ties between age-mates must always have been limited both in time and in intensity. The compulsory abolition of warfare, one of the major activities of age-mates, has deprived membership of a cardinal element, especially among the younger men. Warfare was extremely important to these people and they were notably successful at it, as is shown by the way they robbed their tribal neighbors and drove them back on all fronts for at least two or three generations before the Europeans arrived. It was both emotionally and economically significant. Its disappearance has not only dispirited the people (after many years of guerilla warfare with the British) and removed a vital interest, but it has much reduced the emphasis on age-group membership, making a man's coevals less important and less sought after.

Despite this, however, it would appear that, as commonly in Turkana social organization, the decisive factor in the nature of the age organization and the quality of age-group membership is the limitation of ecology—nomadism with an uncoordinated diversity of movement and the impermanency of neighborhood and territorial groupings through the year, or at the same periods of successive years. Even when warfare brought coevals together, the strength and persistence of their unity must necessarily have been limited and frequently interrupted and broken.

It is well to make the negative point that the Turkana age-group system plays only a marginal part in the politico-legal system of the tribe today. It has been noted that there are no institutionalized political leaders, and in pre-conquest days certain war-leaders and a few diviners were able to assume temporary superiority and influence for only so long as they could retain it individually by force of personality and by practical success in warfare. Self-help was and is the only method of self-protection, the retention of rights, and the restitution of wrongs. In this each family head seeks the support of his peculiarly personal associates ("stock associates"; Gulliver 1955: Chapter 8); each individual's group of such associates is different from that of all others and does not include age-mates as such. In pastoral-economic affairs each family head is morally and legally independent; land is entirely communal and nomadic movement is determined by individual assessment of pastoral conditions and requirements. A man may or may not be influenced by the assessments of

his current neighbors, but in any case he need not be controlled by them and they can bring little pressure to bear on him. In all this the age-group system is unimportant, even insignificant.

Formerly, the age-group system did provide a means by which extratribal, i.e. military, affairs could be conducted. Nevertheless, even here ad hoc war leaders and resourceful diviners were the principal leaders of the day. That is largely finished now; but both in that matter and in the still-existing ordering of individuals and impermanent groups, the scope of the system was and is limited and rudimentary. The age-group system is not coordinated with the kinship system of the Turkana (as it is, for example, among the Nuer; Evans-Pritchard 1939: Chapter IV), nor with territorial units whose integrity and organization it might assist to maintain (e.g., the Jie [Gulliver 1953], the Masai, and the Arusha); nor does it provide a cadre of permanent leaders for specific purposes in ritual affairs (e.g., Jie) or in military or political affairs (e.g., Masai). It is true that the seniormost men in any activity involving age group alignment are afforded a certain influence, a degree of temporary leadership; but the opportunities are only temporary, they are not always advantageously taken and not uncommonly the seniormost men give way to juniors of greater initiative.

The alternations: a hypothesis. There remains the problem of the function of the dichotomous alternations in the Turkana age-organization. Analytically there appears to be little or no significance in the contemporary system, for the division of initiated males into two groupings provides no additional principle of organizational value. Were the alternations correlated with, for example, marriage rules or political leadership or permanently stimulating rivalry situations, it would be possible to understand and explain their function. Failing that one can only report that they currently exist as described.

However, a wider knowledge of the variety of age-group systems in East Africa indicates suggestive similarities between this Turkana dichotomy and that of the Kikuyu and Galla, for example, or, nearer to the Turkana geographically and culturally, the Jie, Karamojong, and Pokot. It would go beyond the scope of the present paper to discuss this, but it may be suggested that in fact a dichotomous principle is analytically discernible in all the various systems of this region, even among such apparently different ones as those of the Nandi and Masai.⁹

The relative insignificance of the contemporary Turkana alternations suggests that possibly they have lost their former functions through a process of social change. This is put forward here as a tentative hypothesis because it is thought that some explanation is required, particularly to assist students who may wish to use the Turkana data for comparative purposes. The hypothesis is not essential to the rest of this paper and need not be accepted as a final explanation.

It is clear that there is a close historico-cultural connection between the Turkana and their Jie neighbors to the west above the Rift Valley Escarpment (Gulliver 1952a). Cultural affinities are notable and, what is more im-

portant here, there are significant similarities between the age-group systems of each society. The Jie have a formalized generation system such that all males must be initiated into the generation immediately following that of their fathers; furthermore, a new generation may not begin initiation until all members of the previous generation have been initiated. Within a generation are a number of age-groups, and there is a system of reckoning seniority which is exactly like that of the Turkana. In practice there are normally only two such generations in formal existence at any time because the newest one is thought to replace that of its grandfathers, and it begins roughly as that of the older men dies away. There is a sense of continuity between a generation and the next but one following it (Gulliver 1953:148). A similar system exists among the Karamojong who, together with the Turkana, Jie, and others, comprise a distinct cultural group of Nilo-Hamites.

The Turkana have a common but vague memory of an older, extinct grouping (the Wart Hogs, *Ngiputiro*) which is categorized by them as of the same order as the two contemporary alternations. It is sometimes described by them as the father of the Stones alternation, although today Stones are all sons of men of the Leopards alternation. As already noted, the Stones are spoken of as senior to the Leopards. My tentative conclusion is that the Wart Hogs comprised a Jie-like generation and were the fathers of the original Stones, who were themselves fathers of the original Leopards. The system has broken down as younger Stones were initiated concurrently with coeval Leopards who were in fact their classificatory sons. For example, in a single extended family some men may well be as old as or older than their fathers' youngest cousins, but these cousins belong to the senior generation irrespective of physiological age. The Jie make conscious efforts to prevent a mixing of successive generations in order to prevent a breakdown of the formal structure. They not only initiate the youngest members of a generation at an early age, but they strictly enforce the postponement of the initiation of the eldest members of the succeeding generation until all their "fathers" have been initiated. This means that some men are compelled to wait until middle age, even beyond the age of 50 years, before they can be formally initiated and establish their own age-groups (Gulliver 1953:157-8).

It is suggested in this hypothesis that the Turkana have come to reject this kind of restriction in favor of following in practice the ideal (qua ideal, common to the Jie also) of normal initiation in young manhood, i.e., at about eighteen years of age. Over no more than a few biological generations this practice would entirely distort the whole structure until the present situation is reached where there are two coexistent groups which are recruited from each other's sons¹⁰. There can no longer be a clear-cut end to one generation and the beginning of that of its sons.

An apparently similar kind of distortion is reported for the Pokot (Suk) of Kenya by Peristiany (1951:292). The Pokot claim to have imitated the Karamojong age-group system; but they, like the Turkana, have favored initiation

in early manhood, and certainly before marriage, irrespective of the structural position of the "father's" generation.

The question remains: why did the Turkana reject the Jie-type restraints on initiation and prefer to initiate males in young adulthood? This may possibly be related to the fact that Turkana age-groups, unlike those of the Jie, were military units and a warrior had to be an initiated man. For the Jie, initiation opens the way to potential ritual privileges and responsibilities, and its postponement is not socially harmful. A military organization, however, cannot afford the lengthy postponement of recruitment of personnel. Also, it is by no means impossible that social contact and intermarriage with both the Masai-like Samburu and the Suk gave added emphasis to military desires and needs.

If this hypothesis is correct, then it means that in place of a Jie-like generational system in which there is a structural and spiritual affinity between the groups of grandfathers and grandsons, the Turkana have reached a situation in which grandfathers and grandsons continuously combine into a single group with a heritage passing internally along a chronological series of constituent age-groups. Two related principles continue in both systems: the structural distinction between fathers and sons, and the structural affinity between grandfathers and grandsons. These basic principles, however, have come to serve rather different social ends in the two societies.

NOTES

¹ I acknowledge permission by the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town, to use material already published in Gulliver 1951. I wish also to acknowledge the assistance of A. H. Jacobs, who read and criticized this paper in draft.

² In ordinary usage this masculine form of the Turkana word means "mountains," whereas the feminine form of the same root means "stones," (*Amuru*). Concerning the alternation, however, the Turkana refer to "stones," as I have here translated, for the masculine form of the root is used to denote its reference to a body of men. The singular form *Imurut* differs from the ordinary usage singular, *imuru*, in being given a personal suffix.

³ Emley recorded informants wholly from the south of the country whereas the bulk of my work was in the west, center, and north.

⁴ *Athepan* is the infinitive form of the verb "to initiate" used as a noun. *Arek* is perhaps more commonly used and may also be used for "alternation"; it may perhaps share a common origin with the Swahili *rika*, (coevals or contemporaries), and Kikuyu *rika* (age-group and generation). Turkana sometimes also use the words *adjure* (strictly "a band or group") and *atherpic* (strictly "a crowd") for both age-group and alternation.

⁵ For most of the year and for all of poor years, the cattle are compelled to live in the restricted mountain areas where grass is available; but the head of a nuclear family and his wives remain in the plains, the preferred areas of residence, where camels, goats, and sheep remain all the year round. There are, of course, numerous exceptions to this simplified general pattern (Gulliver 1955: Chapter 2).

⁶ Turkaneland covers an area of some 270 miles from north to south and about 100 miles from east to west, though narrowing sharply to the south, and comprises about 24,000 square miles.

⁷ If the occasion is connected with a specific age-group, the seniormost man of the group who is present cuts off this special meat and it is eaten by him and the other one or two seniormost age-

mates, although there may be, by courtesy, members of more senior age-groups present to join in the general feast.

⁹ Internecine warfare, involving the use of spears ("proper warfare") seems never to have occurred among the Turkana, and fights with clubs and sticks were and are usually short-lived affairs, scarcely more than brawls.

⁹ Among the *Maa* group, comprising the various Masai subtribes and also the Samburu, Arusha, and so forth, a principle of dichotomy runs through many parts of the society as well as the age-group system itself.

¹⁰ Unfortunately, a genealogical test of this hypothesis is impossible as Turkana seldom remember details about their grandfathers, and almost never about earlier ancestors, while many know virtually nothing even of their grandfathers.

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NOTES

ANLU: A WOMEN'S UPRISING IN THE BRITISH CAMEROONS

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On November 22, 1958, 2,000 women of the Kom tribe, bedecked with vines, entered the government station at Bamenda after a 38 mile march of a day and a half, in protest at the summoning for interrogation of four of their leaders.

This was one of the more dramatic aspects of an uprising of some 7,000 women in Bamenda Province which began in April, 1958, and has lasted for a year with no end in sight. Its interest is that here is an example of an old institution called *Anlu* (pronounced ah-loo, with "a" nasalized), which traditionally operated to punish offenders of certain "moral" rules, being converted (with the aid of two male instigators) into an organization of political pressure, the major objective of which was to unseat the party in power, and vote in the opposition party in the January, 1959, elections. The change in form and function of *Anlu* will be the primary concern of this paper.¹

Anlu traditionally referred to a disciplinary technique employed by the women for particular offences. These included the beating or insulting (by uttering such obscenities as "Your vagina is rotten") of a parent; beating of a pregnant woman; incest; seizing of a person's sex organs during a fight; the pregnancy of a nursing mother within two years after the birth of the child; and the abusing of old women. A woman thus offended would summon women to her aid by sounding a war-cry made by beating the lips with the fingers while uttering a high-pitched sound. A man could present his complaint to the head woman of his compound. She would discuss the matter with older women of the quarter

and they would then decide on a course of action. The women could summon the offender, hear the case, and decide to accept the apologies and payment of goat and fowls. This would settle the case. An intermediary could also plead the case of the offender. If the offender failed to appear, or if he was an habitual offender, more drastic action was taken. In the early stages of the persecution, however, the women had to clear their action with the Fon's (the paramount chief's) representative, the *tabekwiufon*, the man serving as priest, chief executor of the Fon's orders, and head of the once-powerful secret society known as *kwiufon*. The *tabekwiufon* could bring an immediate halt to the proceeding if he thought it unjustified. His agreement was symbolized by his turning over his drum to the women who now had official sanction to continue.

The women of the quarter and sometimes the neighbouring quarters then were enlisted. On a set day they dressed in leafy vines, articles of men's clothing, and paraded to the culprit's compound around five o'clock in the morning. There they danced, sang mocking and usually obscene songs composed for the occasion, and defiled the compound by defecation or by urinating in the water storage vessels. If the culprit was seen he could be pelted with stones or a type of wild fruit called "garden eggs". Then the women shed their vines and garden eggs in the compound, leaving some of each hanging on the threshold as the *Anlu* sign that its use has been banned. In some cases they would prohibit the offender from visiting other compounds and instruct the people that no one should visit him. Sometimes

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the culprit fled to another compound or even another village, but *Anlu* was continued. At the next weekly market the women voluntarily attended, dressed in their vines, and publicly ridiculed the culprit by dancing and singing mocking songs.

A person thus persecuted rarely could hold out for as long as two months. When his endurance was at an end, he put the *Anlu* vines around his neck as a sign of capitulation and went to the women to plead for pardon. If his pleas and indemnity goods were accepted, they took him naked to the stream and bathed him (the whole body had to be immersed), a ritualistic act which removed the guilt. If they had contaminated his cooking pots with the garden eggs, contact with which caused one to become thin and sick, these were washed in the stream. Then they led him back to his compound, rubbed him with powdered camwood and palm oil and gave him food. The important act, however, was the bathing. After this the incident was never mentioned again.

The invoking of *Anlu* was a serious affair and used sparingly. One informant, about 35 years of age, said he had seen it used only four times in his lifetime.

Such then was *Anlu*, an institution probably brought with them when the Kom migrated into their present area from the north-east some 300 years ago. Among the other tribes of this Tikar migration *Anlu*, or its counterpart, seems absent.

Anlu persisted in its traditional role until the latter part of 1957. Then began its conversion into a highly organized and powerful political organization that was to seize control of tribal affairs from the men, control the tribal vote in the 1959 election, and by its persecution and sometimes terroristic treatment of non-members create disturbances that caused considerable concern to the local authorities. Men who attempted to interfere with *Anlu* were chastized by their wives who might refuse to feed them (the women supply most of the food as well as prepare it) until they capitulated, and there were stories of women hiding all the clothing of their husbands so they were restricted by modesty to their compounds.

The conversion of *Anlu* into a political organization was the work of two politically ambitious Kom men. They held out to the women the hope of a solution of their real and imaginary problems. Some of the latter were introduced for the occasion, for example, the rumour that the government was selling their land; that the Fon was selling it to the Premier who was selling it to the Ibo. The hatred of the Ibo, although there are none in the Kom area, is almost a neurosis and one shared by most people in Bamenda. Since the Kom women are the farmers and their lands are regarded as almost sacred this was a serious threat, and this fear that their land was being sold was by far the most important reason for the uprisings. The fact that perhaps 99% plus of these women are illiterate made the introduction of such falsehoods relatively easy. On the other hand the two men made good use of actual, though minor, grievances such as the government's negligence in expediting their claims of crop damage against the Fulani, whose unfenced cattle strayed into Kom farms and ruined their crops. Actually there are few Fulani in the Kom area. It was, however, a fairly serious problem in the Bafut and Nsaw areas where women took it upon themselves to kill a number of Fulani cattle in retribution. The premature enforcement of a relatively new contour-farming regulation did nothing to help matters. This regulation, passed in August, 1955, ruled that the women must orient their linear garden beds horizontally to the slopes rather than the traditional vertical arrangement, to prevent soil erosion in this mountainous terrain. The Kom women believed that this ruling was a proof of the fact that their land was being sold, and the fact that some of the women were fined for infraction of this rule was a further source of dissatisfaction. The uprooting of "wrongly" planted beds by an injudicious Agricultural assistant (he was later discharged) in an attempt to enforce the rule heaped more coals on the fire.

By the use of demagoguery, sincere promises, the exploitation of dissatisfactions, intimidations, and the clever mingling of

Kom and European ideas, the women were welded into an effective organization whose membership at its height was estimated at 99% of the Kom women. Traditional *Anlu* was a disciplinary technique, not an organization. New *Anlu* was efficiently organized with officers, local chapters, weekly meetings, and a treasury kept solvent by weekly dues. Elements of old *Anlu* that were retained included: the name, the concept of the right of women to band together for the purpose of punishing an offender, the use of the "war-whoop" as a signal, demonstrations by dancing and singing of mocking songs, bedecking the person with vines and garden eggs when demonstrating, and the use of the garden egg plant as a sign of stigma.

The organization of new *Anlu* is based on local chapters or "cells" located in every quarter. The division of tribal areas into quarters (or wards) is the old Tikar pattern of political and social organization. Each *Anlu* chapter has a "quarter head" (*nāṅlu*), a leader who conducts the quarter meetings and transmits orders from central headquarters.

At the top of the organization is the Queen (*naḥónanlu*), who determines policy and "law" with the aid of ex-officio male counsellors and issues the orders for its execution. She rarely attends quarter meetings, but is informed of their wishes and needs by the Spies. Beneath her dress she wears bells around her waist and on official appearances she dons a monkey skin hat and a red bandolier. The idea of a Queen chosen by the women to represent them is an ancient one in the Kom area. In former times such a woman had considerable authority and even her own stool (symbolic of chiefly rank), but the previous Fon had suppressed this office.

Second in command is the Spokesman, (*ānkumte*), who makes the announcements and most of the speeches and acts as the official spokesman for *Anlu*. When the District Officer comes for investigations, for example, she will represent the group as spokesman. During the demonstration she wears a man's shirt, shorts and hat, puts

soot on her face, but does not wear the vines. She is referred to in pidgin as the "D.O."

Third in importance are the Quarterheads, followed by the Spies (*gwéze*). This is an adaptation from the warring days when men called *gwéze* spied upon the enemy. Today Spies vary in number with the size of the quarter, the smallest having five Spies; the largest, eight. Their function is to meet with the Queen and take information and instructions back to their quarters. If it is decided that a non-member should be prohibited from working her farm, a Spy from that quarter will place the vines and garden egg plant on the farm to mark it taboo.

Below the Spies are the Messengers (*lélentum*), from three to six for each quarter, who, besides carrying messages, summon people for an interview or meeting. On duty they wear red caps, men's shirts and shorts, sometimes shoes, and carry staffs.

Perhaps the most unusual adaptation is that of the Scribes (*kinulua*), usually referred to as "Sanitaries," for Sanitary Officer. Each quarter has one or two of these whose duty it is to stand at meetings with pencil and exercise book and pretend to record any orders or rules passed. There are said to be several who can actually read and write. They copy the form and costume, if not the function, of the male Sanitary Inspector found in every market. They wear men's clothing, like that of the Sanitary Officer, consisting of a shirt, belt, trousers and a pith helmet.

At the bottom of the ladder are the deliberately humorous Jesters or clowns (*nikoṅ*). They wear white paint over their entire bodies and often wear huge feathered head-dresses. They perform only at large, central meetings of *Anlu* and their duty is to entertain the crowd. Male clowns are in evidence at many Tikari ceremonies, particularly funerals and the annual dances, but this is the only instance in which women have used the clown.

This is the structure of the society which by the summer of 1958 had seized the power from the men rendering the Fon and his

executive council ineffectual, a breakdown of traditional authority which persists as this is being written in May, 1959. By the middle of 1958 this tightly organized and well-disciplined group was strong enough to take the political initiative and begin a series of mass actions.

On July 3, 1958, at a huge meeting at Njinikom, where the two male advisors and the two female leaders reside, it was decided to march to the neighbouring village of Belo to show that *Anlu* had taken over authority in the whole Kom area. This first mass demonstration took place on July 8, when some 2,000 women dressed in men's clothing, vines, and carrying wooden staffs seven feet long, marched from Njinikom to the weekly market at Belo village, eight miles away. Upon arrival they crowded the market so that business came to a halt. Even when the *tabekwiufon*, the Fon's representative, tried to announce the news in the marketplace as is the custom, the women seized his staff of authority and would not permit him to speak. The staff has not been returned to this day. The zinc roofs of the market were pounded with their staffs, parts of them being dented and otherwise damaged, and one part was torn off. When it was discovered that the nearby mission school was still in operation (they thought it had been closed), they rushed up the hill to close it and sealed it with the taboo plant of garden eggs. After trying to keep the school open, the two mission groups in the area decided that the low attendance warranted closing three weeks early, and, except for a few schools in the bush areas, all were re-opened in September at the end of the summer vacation. The attendance in September, however, was sharply reduced, in some instances to one-third of normal, but when the second session started in February it was back to about 90% of normal in most schools.

Back in the market the women leaders laid down the following ultimatum, including:

1. From now on *Anlu* would be in control.
2. That any people who did not follow *Anlu* would be exiled.
3. That any woman who did not follow *Anlu* would not be allowed to farm.
4. That there would be no more use of courts, schools, churches or hospitals, and that any woman who sent her child to school would be exiled.
5. That the Fon and *ju-ju* men were no longer in authority.
6. That no strangers would be allowed to stay in the Kom area; all Hausa, Fulani and Europeans should leave. (To illustrate this, they tore off part of the thatching of a nearby house owned by a man from another tribe, Bafut.)
7. That four mission teachers at Njinikom must leave the Kom area.

On July 11, 1958, the Premier made his scheduled visit to the Kom region, despite inhospitable warnings. His caravan, escorted by the District Officer, encountered a number of road blocks in the form of stones piled as high as three feet across the only road leading in and out of Kom. The party cleared paths wide enough to allow passage of the vehicles and met with no other form of resistance. The women, however, had been instructed to boycott his speeches, and only a few men were present.

As a result of these threats and machinations the District Officer together with the Fon went to a mass meeting of *Anlu* at Njinikom on July 14, 1958. There were an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 women present, all dressed in men's clothing, covered with vines, and holding their formidable-looking staffs. The District Officer stated that "it looked more like a forest than anything else." The women were quiet and orderly during the meeting in which they presented their grievances. They were told that their complaints would be heard and considered, but that law and order must and would be maintained, that further demonstrations, particularly assaults, damage to markets, and the blocking of roads would not be tolerated. They were assured by the District Officer, and the fact was confirmed by the

Fon, that stories about their land being sold were nonsense. They were told that the rule enforcing contour-farming would be held in abeyance and that where fines had been paid to the court because of the rule, the cases would be reviewed to determine whether or not they were justified. They were informed that the requested transfer of the four teachers from the mission school was not within the jurisdiction of the government, that while they were at liberty to keep their own children from attending school they must, under no circumstances, molest or interfere with any other children whose parents wished them to continue. The meeting broke up with the women apparently satisfied. *Anlu* activity continued, however, but there were no more overt outbreaks or demonstrations for some time.

Although *Anlu* is not a nativistic movement, it is apparent that there are a number of nativistic elements in it. The rejection of modern institutions such as schools and courts in favour of the old ways is a case in point. A Belo missionary was told, "In five years you will see no more zinc roofs in Kom." There was some difference of opinion, however, with some of the more radical members wanting to eliminate all European things, and others wishing to retain such European-introduced institutions as the public corn-mill and the maternity hospital. There is also a xenophobic element in *Anlu*, although no foreigner actually has been expelled from the area. Besides the partial destruction of the Bafu man's roof there was some talk of driving out the Fulani and Hausa, but no action was taken except for the killing of ten Fulani cattle at Babanki because of crop destruction. Little antagonism has been shown Europeans. The one example of a European who attempted to drive through a mass of *Anlu* women on the road and had his Land Rover pounded with their sticks until he stopped, apparently was a case of mistaken identity. They thought he might be one of the Premier's party, but when he got out and iden-

tified himself he was allowed to pass through.

The most important element of the movement, however, appears to be a political one. They seem to have been united more by what they are against (government as embodied in the K.N.C.² party) than sure of what they are for. This anti-K.N.C. feeling, at times fanatical, did not stop with the K.N.D.P.³ victory in the January election of 1959. Most European observers were of the opinion that *Anlu* would subside after this victory, that they would let bygones be bygones, but such was not the case. Persecution of the K.N.C. sympathizers continued and even accelerated. There was still no neutrality—a person not for *Anlu* was considered to be against it. Non-*Anlu* persons were still prohibited from attending any public function or ceremony, even a funeral, although they were allowed to attend the weekly market. Their crops were uprooted and the garden beds levelled. Some farms were confiscated. The uprooting of crops is a particularly serious affair, and the old *Anlu* never would have sanctioned it. Similarly, one case of *Anlu* women beating a non-*Anlu* pregnant woman was an offence specifically prohibited by old *Anlu*.

The problem of crop destruction was brought to a head by a man who took the matter to court when the fields of his wives were scattered. The destruction had been witnessed and photographed by a party of travellers passing through from Nigeria. As a result some 35 women were brought to the Bamenda court and fined £170 plus £186 for the lawyer's fees. This was a bewildering experience to the women who believed that since "their" party had won the election, the government, police and the courts were theirs. Since then crop destruction apparently ceased.

As the women began to realize that they had been used for a political purpose they began dropping out of *Anlu*. One woman said, "This is not the old *Anlu*, this is white man's *Anlu*." From nearly 100% membership, it has dropped off to about 60%, but *Anlu* still is a force to be reckoned with.

¹Kameruns National Congress.

²Kameruns National Democratic Party.

Various solutions to the problem have been suggested by the Kom men, who, along with a sizeable minority of the women, are quite weary of the whole affair. "*Anlu* should be outlawed and all further meetings prohibited." "The leaders should receive heavy fines if further activity is discovered." An educated man from a neighbouring tribe suggests that the "present Fon, who is old, be retired in favour of a younger man."

Whatever the solution, it is apparent that the techniques of political persecution such as beatings, sabotage, ostracism, and above all intimidation, do not make for a contented society. One police official defined *Anlu* as "mass intimidation." The fact that unrest among the women is present in several neighbouring tribes is also a source of some concern. Whether deliberately spread or merely contagious, *Anlu* or something similar, has become an agency or clearing house for women's dissatisfactions in a widening area. Among one tribe the reason for an uprising is resentment of new farming techniques, another tribe protests the education levy of the local authority, a third demands retribution for crop damage.

Whether all such "disturbances," as they are officially called, should be termed *Anlu* is debatable. It is apparent, however, that the same pattern of mass demonstration recurs with each tribe utilizing such elements as the donning of vines, the carrying of the long staff, the use of the rather eerie "war-cry," and the mocking song. That a good part of the women's complaints are legitimate, or that a women's emancipation movement might be justified, is not to be denied. It is rather the almost desperate methods employed that cause the concern.

The statement of one young man is fairly representative of the more sober-minded men in Kom. "New *Anlu* has been a bad thing for Kom people, for it has caused too much suffering, and a serious loss of school time for many children. Even families have been split by this movement, with some sisters being estranged from one another because of their difference in opinions. We know that old *Anlu* is dead and will never be revived, but new *Anlu*, even if it is put down now, will leave scars that will be with us for a long time."

NOTES

NOTES

NGARAGÉ, A GBEYA SOCIETY¹

WILLIAM J. SAMARIN

Of the several societies² into which a **Gbéyá** may be initiated (e.g. **gbéle**, **ngafu**, **gombana**, **gaza**, **sumbáli**),³ there is one, the **ngaragé** society, which is associated with the principal activity of the Dry Season,⁴ namely, hunting by grass-burning. There is some evidence for the conjecture that it is a Banda importation, for the Banda (at least of Fort Sibut and Bouca) have a **ngaragé** society whose activities are associated with grass-burning. As a matter of fact, some people of this area actually claim that **ngaragé** came from Bouca and others that it came from the direction of **Botan-gafu**. All of the Gbaya people of the Districts of Bossangoa and Bozoum are acquainted with it, but it seems not to be found among the Gbanu of the District of Bossembele except at Lindaoro (on the Bossangoa-Bossembele road), which is near an area inhabited by **Bandas**. The **ngaragé** is also found among the **Karṣ** of the Bozoum District (among whom the **sumbáli** society is very important); these people call it **ngaraggé**.

Here on the Bozoum-Bossangoa road (approximately 35 kilometres from Bossangoa) two kinds of **ngaragé** societies are known: from **Gbazija** west is found the **Mbay** (as the Gbaya of Bozoum are here known) form and east of **Gbazija** the **Down-River** (i.e. the **Wáam**) form. We have no data except linguistic to distinguish the two: the two esoteric languages are mutually unintelligible and lexically quite distinct. We deal here only with the **Down-River** variety. Other types depend on the fetish involved, for which see below.

The **ngaragé** society, like all the other societies, is controlled by the **wí fiyo** 'fetish man' and all of the crucial activities are associated with fetishistic practices. The

following discussion will therefore be more intelligible if we first comment on **Gbeya** fetishism.

All of the principal **Gbeya** fetishes (**fiyo**) are owned by a certain man, called the **wan fiyo**. It is he who dispenses the medicine (**yina**), treats the sick, and sells to others the knowledge of and right to use the medicines. Even when others buy the right to act as practitioners, he remains the master (**wan**) of the fetish.

The **ngaragé** involves one of three fetishes, the **gba yó**, **gème**, or **gbéle** (also called **boro**). (Not only are the fetishes different, but there are also differences in the initiation rites. Thus, in the **gème** variety of the **ngaragé** the initiates are taken along the banks of small streams at night where they must try to catch fish with their hands.) We are concerned here with the third.⁵ The master of the **gbéle** is called **ayúwá** and he has six assistants whose seniority is in the following order: **gba sáśá**, **yaléngge**, **tengéle**, **yagbómgbá**, **yaángo**, **matagba**.⁶ These assistants are called **masí fiyo** and must be distinguished from the **masí ngaragé** who are initiated into the **ngaragé** society (called **tek ngaragé** 'fall . . .'). The **masí fiyo** need not be of the same clan as that of the **ayúwá**.

The **ngaragé** activities begin with someone's assuming the supervision of the area (**giya** or **gbíya**) to be burned (**bá gbíya** 'take . . .'). He then becomes its **wan** 'master' for that one season. When the grass has begun to get dry, that is, in the month of November (**tí ǂálá**), he sends members of his village (now not necessarily consisting of one clan) to burn the limits of the **gbíya** (**də tí zṣ** 'burn limit (of) grass'), the purpose of which is to prevent an acci-

dental fire from prematurely spreading through the **gbíya**.

Later on, when the master and his **mási fiyo** decide that it is time to burn, he sends them out to get some **mási ngaragé** (who in this case are married men) to build (**say**, verb) the enclosure (**mana** or **gbaká**). It is erected of upright poles and mil stalks (with no roof) not far from the village.

The next step is to determine who shall set fire to the **gbíya**. The **ayúwá** goes to a diviner (**wí a wèn mō** 'person put affair thing') who learns that it is so-and-so. When he is called and agrees to assuming this responsibility, he and the **ayúwá** proceed to make new bark-cloth gee-strings which they substitute for the ones they had worn. They leave off sleeping in the regular house, henceforth remaining continent, and sleep outside or in the **tuwá hisa** 'young men's house'. They go once more to the diviner to make certain that he is the one to set fire to the grass. Then they and all the **mási fiyo** go to sleep near the fetish house.

Preparations are now made for the actual burning and for the initiation of new "members". The **ayúwá** sends out some men to collect animal droppings from the area and to plug up with leaves all holes on the limits of the **gbíya** (to prevent animals from leaving before the grass is burnt). This is accomplished by cooking the droppings at night and then secretively overturning the pot and hiding its contents until after the burning. This precaution is supposed to kill the **dān sadfe** 'spirits of the animals'. Other **mási** go to get the small limbs of the **zyá ri** tree to make into **mgbake**. (These are whistles about 8 to 12 inches long, the uses of which are mentioned below.) Others go out to the surrounding villages to recruit "members" (**bé ngaragé** 'young . . .'). They carry with them a **mgbake**, a **gító** (horn-instrument), and tail feathers of the **kóso** bird. "Joining" the society is voluntary, but if these recruiters find someone they want to force into joining, one of them sneaks up behind him and sticks one of the feathers into his hair. When one has thus been

caught, he considers it unlucky to refuse.

The initiation rites then take place. At night the **ayúwá** and his assistants enter the **gbaká** while the "candidates" remain outside. The **mási** who stays with them sends them in one at a time by calling out, "I send you **gaza** so-and-so."⁷ As soon as he crawls through the low entrance, those inside begin to "kill him" (**gbɛ a**): Someone grabs his head between two hands and twists it back and forth; they pinch his ear lobes, put stones in his nostrils and squeeze his nose, and finally pour into his eyes a terribly burning mixture of urine and the scrapings of the root of the **gan maro** tree. As soon as a few regain some of their sight, they begin to dance to drums and chant (the words of which are **ngákórá báringi mbóó, ngárásó mbóó, péré péré бага, etc.**).⁸ Spectators stand outside and the old women cheer them on. During this same night they are each presented with a **mgbake**, taught the esoteric language,⁹ which they must speak instead of **Gbeya** or **Sango** (the trade language)¹⁰ until they are washed (for which see below) on the pain of death. They are also told not to eat fish or manioc greens, not to sleep in a house that is ordinarily used for that purpose, not to touch a woman's breast or to have intercourse. It is at this time that the **bé ngaragé** take society names for themselves, e.g. **tarú (baga)** 'meat sauce', **gbafí (baga)** 'animal bone', **sáwó (baga)** 'tendons', **mónó (baga)** 'little animal'.

The **ayúwá** appoints an interpreter, the **tágara**, a young man who functions for only one season, and whose job it is to translate into **ngaragé** what is said to them in **Gbeya**, and to translate into **Gbeya** what they must say in the esoteric language. He is not actually a member of the society, and is chosen only for his ability to speak the **ngaragé** language which he has acquired by hearing it spoken in previous years.

At dawn the **bé ngaragé** leave the **gbaká** in search of mil stalks to use as firebrands. In the meantime, the **ayúwá's** wife (who is called **yinda**) prepares a meal of manioc dough and sesame sauce into which she has put **zímá** (a certain vegetable). When the

bé ngaragé have returned, they lay their brands around the fetish (**kalá gba yó**)¹¹ following which they eat what has been prepared. They then begin dancing and continue until it is time to go to the bush. (A Gbaya dance consists of more or less animated shuffling of the feet, accompanied by back-and-forth movements of the shoulders.)

The **bé ngaragé** not only set fire to the grass but also see to it that the **ayúwá** gets his share of the kill, which is either a front or back leg of any large animal as well as the lungs. If one should refuse to give this meat, the **bé ngaragé** threaten to poison the meat by touching it with the **mgbake**; such poisoned meat, if eaten, would kill one. The **mgbake** is also used by the **bé ngaragé** to call to each other over the noise and confusion of the hunt. The hooves of the animals they kill themselves are strung on the **mgbake** and carried around until the time the society breaks up for the year. That same day the **bé ngaragé** return to the village with the meat and place it at the **wan**'s door. They may eat some of the meat, but the rest is left until the morrow. That night there is another dance open to everyone.

The **bé ngaragé** are able to get meat not only by requisitioning it in the bush, but also by deceiving people back in the village. Thus, when a woman or anyone else who has never been initiated as a **ngaragé** either splashes water on him or else touches him with a mil stalk, he falls on the ground and feigns death. Other **ngaragé** come and carry him away (so that people will not see that he is actually still alive), and tell the offender that the only way that he can be brought back to life is to make an offering of a chicken to the **gbéle**, and if there is no chicken, to get fish. This chicken the **bé ngaragé** may eat, but only the **ayúwá** and the **masí** can eat the fish.

The day after the dance, the villagers come and the man of every household gets a share of the meat, even if he had been successful in the hunt on his own. The **bé ngaragé** too get their share, but this

is left with the wife of the **ayúwá** who prepares it for them.

Preparations are now made for another dance which marks the washing away of the dirt on their bodies, for they had not washed since they first were initiated. The **ayúwá** prepares beer (**dɔɔ kúte** 'beer soot'). During the time that it is being made, approximately seven days, the **bé ngaragé** buy, borrow or make various body adornments for the big dance. Some of these are called **ɔ́ɔ́ɔ́**, **gbákáɔ́** (also called **mbé tóré zəra**), **ngala**, **mámbyá**, **ndərə mgbɛɔ́**, and **kisi**. Offerings are then made to the fetish: money (formerly small iron bars called **vará**), which is offered by the **bé ngaragé**, and the fetish's special food, which is prepared by the **ayúwá**. (All of this money, in addition to that which is given at the time of the ceremonial cleansing, is passed on to the **abá** 'father', the originator of a fetishistic rite or its principal **wan** in a given area. But after an **ayúwá** has thus repaid his **abá**, from whom he acquired the right to practice, three times in successive years, he and the **masí** keep their "earnings".

Having entered the **gbaká**, the **bé ngaragé** bathe themselves and dress up, rubbing themselves down with oil and putting on the various adornments. They then arrange themselves in a circle or concentric circles according to when they first were initiated. While the **ayúwá** holds the medicine bag (**fərə́ fiyo**), his eldest son, who is called in **ngaragé** terminology **ringi**, sings out the words:

**mbára pé mbóó rí mbóó mbó mbóó
sákáwára zóba kúmbere péto
mbó mboo**

(The **ringi** and the **ngóná ringi**, called **masí ngaragé**, are appointed by the **ayúwá** to supervise over most of the non-ritual activities of the society. They have formerly been initiated into the **ngaragé** society but are not members of the **gbéle** society, i.e. not **masí fiyo**.) To this song and the beat of the drums all the others in the **gbaká** slowly dance around the drums. (This part of the ceremony is called **de do** 'do do'.) Finally, led by the **ayúwá**, and

still singing and dancing, they all leave the enclosure and thrice circle the **dal** drums set up outside. (This is called **do ká wéey** 'do of men' because it involves something repeated three times.) The **ayúwá** then departs (with the medicine bag) and sits down in front of his house. This is the sign for all the rest, including the crowd which had already assembled in anticipation of the dance, to begin. The succeeding hours until way into the night are spent in dancing, beer drinking and general festivity.

At any one of the many dances in which the **bé ngaragé** participate a girl is allowed to express her sentiments toward a young man, who may never even have made a proposal of marriage, by going up to him and wiping the perspiration off his face. Ordinarily, a father never looks for beaux for his daughter, and the culture requires a girl to be very modest in the presence of her fiancé. Because of the sexual taboo, the boy is not allowed to touch the girl until he is cleansed. She then leaves her home and goes to live with her chosen one. It is required, however, that the bride-price be quickly paid or else the girl's family would reclaim her. Women have been known to leave their husbands for a **bé ngaragé**, and some men in this way even acquire several wives.

After the dance, all the **bé ngaragé** put away their adornments in the enclosure. Now begins the period of three or four months which ends with the ritual washing and termination of the society's activities until the next Dry Season, or until reconvened by the **ayúwá**. During this time the men hunt together, go to other dances, repair the **ayúwá**'s house and, when the rains begin, work in his garden. The **bé ngaragé** are allowed to return home to perform certain necessary tasks.

When the rains have really come in earnest and people have begun to think once again about their garden work, the "session" of the society is ended in the following way. The **bé ngaragé** once again try to borrow money and acquire adornments for themselves while the **ayúwá** and the neighbouring

villages prepare beer. At each stage of the beer-making and finally drinking, there is much dancing and general festivity in which anyone may participate.

When the beer is drunk and the guests have gone home, the **ngaragé** once again enter the **gbaká**. Just before dawn they begin to dance the **do** as they did before. When they come out, the **ayúwá** makes a good offering to the fetish, consisting primarily of the food which had been tabooed. He and his assistants then re-enter the enclosure while the **bé ngaragé** remain outside. They are now to be relieved of having to speak the esoteric language (**kay wen há nú wa** 'take word from mouth their'). To each **bé ngaragé** who is outside, the **ayúwá** calls out **húrúba zýré бага** (or whatever name he has been called by) **mbóó** and the **bé ngaragé** answers **ngá-kórá!** This is repeated four times, after which the latter cries out **wéey** 'Yeah!' (in **Gbeya**) and runs in. He is now free to speak **Gbeya**. All of the **bé ngaragé** are once again instructed in good living.

Once they have all reassembled in the enclosure, they proceed with the ritual washing. All the **bé ngaragé** sit in a row. Then, beginning with the **ayúwá** and ending with the last of the assistants, each of the medicine-men washes the **ngaragé** by dipping a lump, one in each hand, of the medicines mixed with (the once tabooed) **wiki** pulp into the water prepared with medicines in the special pot called **zórá fiyo** and drawing it down each cheek, down the sternum, down the upper part of each hand and each in-step. The rite continues with the anointing: A **kón** nut (*Sapotaceae*, *Butyrospermum*) is roasted in the fire and scraped in a potsherd. Into the oil that is thus extracted each medicine-man dips his finger and returns to anoint each **ngaragé** on the spots where he had been washed. A blessing in **Gbeya** accompanies each anointing: "May you eat and get fat; may your body be in good condition (**rádádá**), and may you not get sick."

Before being allowed to return home the **bé ngaragé** are required to pay for having had the privilege of being in the society.

Each **bé ngaragé** first pays a sum of money to the **masi ngaragé** whose name he happens to have; otherwise, he pays it to the **ayúwá**. Then another sum is paid to the **ayúwá** for the food that was consumed during the three months. At this time the **bé ngaragé** put on their old clothes which had been taboo during the society's session and return to their owners the adornments that they had borrowed. Each of these is also presented with a gift.

The final ritual is now performed. The **ayúwá** takes a small portion of the food which he has had prepared and gives it to each **bé ngaragé** who, taking it with his right hand, throws it over his right shoulder. Three times is this done; the fourth time, the **ayúwá** takes a larger portion and places it in the mouth of the **bé ngaragé** who eats it. All of them partake of the food, after which they bathe once again (in ordinary water) and depart for home.¹²

Sessions of the **ngaragé** society are not held every year at any one place. It is up to the **wan gbiya**, who, as has been said, is actually in charge of the grass-burning, to call upon the **ngaragé** practitioners to hold a session and initiate its members. Except for the practitioners, the **ayúwá** and his **masi**, all members of the society must be reinitiated year after year if they choose to participate. However, once a **bé ngaragé** has assumed a name and paid to be in the society, he is no longer obligated to pay. So it happens that there are many men who participate over a period of several years.

We have described the activities of the **ngaragé** society as if they were well-patterned and therefore predictable for the whole area, but this is not exactly true. The **ngaragé** activities are a complex of elements which are not everywhere realized in a like manner. There are first the grass-burning hunting activities which are not esoteric but enthusiastically shared by all of the population near any large area to be burned. In this case the **wan** of the grass is an elder of a clan which lost a member in the previous year's hunt. (Around where we are living it is the rule that most people do not know who has assumed the burning

rights until the limits of the area are burned.) The **wan** does not necessarily have to be a medicine-man nor have anything to do with any other secret society. (However, we find that no Christian has ever assumed the ownership of the **gbiya**, perhaps because fetishes are invoked to insure success in the hunt.)

Secondly, many of the features of the initiation rites remind us very much of the circumcision rites that were once, our informants tell us, more elaborate than they are now. About thirty years ago young men were circumcised, initiated, and instructed in a way that is familiar to those acquainted with African cultures. In the District of Bossangoa most young men are nowadays circumcised by a nurse at one of the European dispensaries or by some private practitioner who performs the operation for a fee. One has to go to Bozoum to see a closely related people maintaining some of the circumcision activities, but even these are very simple in comparison with those of the Banda, say, at Fort Sibut.

Thirdly, the actual fetishistic rites performed at the time of the grass burning, even when accompanied by the **ngaragé**, are separate entities. The owner of the grass may have his own fetishes or he may call on the powerful **gbéle** medicine-men, but these may know nothing at all of the **ngaragé** ceremonies and are obliged to call on some elder who has gone through the ceremony to show them what to do. What stands out as being distinctly a **ngaragé** innovation is the esoteric language. Undoubtedly, there are many other distinctive features, but we have been unable to sort them out.

If the **ngaragé** society is a borrowing (and a recent one), as we believe it is, it has been adapted to such an extent that it no longer stands out as being foreign, but has made grass-burning activities more diversified while compensating for the disappearance of the circumcision rites. In doing this it does not seem to have introduced new fetishistic practices but to have utilized long-standing ones.

What then is the function of the **ngaragé**?

The key to the understanding of its functions, we believe, is in the fact that its activities are restricted to the Dry Season; throughout the rest of the year there is even no feeling of unity among its members. We see in it the following functions:

1. It is a time of festivity. Since **Gbeya** life has somehow been deprived of public ceremonies (for none of the important phases of one's life—birth, puberty, marriage, death—is marked by the type of activity that one's neighbours participate in or enjoy), the **ngaragé** introduces a time of excitement and enjoyment that one can talk of for a long time.

2. It is a time for acquiring renown. In the first place, the name of the sponsor of the **ngaragé** for any year becomes well known as people talk of the dance to which they had been invited. And if many animals are killed and the dance is a success, his name is naturally associated with it. The members of the society also get talked about if they are able to adorn themselves and dance better than their comrades. This aspect of the **ngaragé** is not to be slighted, for in a society where prestige acquired by material wealth is not significant, there are sometimes other substitutes; this is one of them.

3. It is a time when the sponsor is able, in return for initiating the activities, to

acquire help in house-building or garden-making projects. Among the **Gbeya** payment for such labour in European money is even now rare. The usual payment is in beer or feasting (which is not looked upon as a payment but as an exchange of service).

4. It is a time when the **ngaragé**-giving group is able to obtain more meat than usual. Since each household goes to the fire with the aim of providing only itself with meat, the local group as a whole may not profit from the success of one of the households. But the **ngaragé**, through the sponsorship of the village elder, becomes a local thing and the meat that the **bé ngaragé** bring back is divided by him and shared by all the people under his influence. Needless to say, the **bé ngaragé**, with their power to "poison" meat, can bring in much more than the local people can, for they meet many strangers in the hunt who are from an area so far away that they would not profit from the division of the sponsor's meat.

5. The **Gbeya**, not viewing this subject so scientifically, of course, see only the following purposes of the society: The **bé ngaragé** receive instruction in good living (**góná tá**); they get dressed up and have much fun; they get much to eat; they get wives.

NOTES

1. The **Gbeya** are a Gbaya-speaking people of western Ubangi-Shari (French Equatorial Africa, now the République Centrafricaine), whose culture has hitherto never been described. But two ethnographic works on related peoples in this area (the Gbaya of Bozoum and the Manza) are the following:

Günter Tessman: *Die Baja: ein Negerstamm im mittleren Sudan*. Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder, 1934 and 1937. 2 volumes. Out of print.

A. M. Vergiat: *Moeurs et coutumes manjas*. Paris, 1937.

For information on the related Ngbaga of the Belgian Congo see H. Burssens, *Les peuplades de l'entre Congo-Ubangi*. Ethnographic Survey of Africa. London: International African Institute, 1958.

A linguistic map accompanies the article by Samarin on "The Gbaya Languages", *Africa*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1958.

2. They are called in **Gbeya**, **mə zāan** 'thing of outside'. One informant suggested that they were so called because initiates are instructed within a roofless enclosure. All such initiations are supposed to help one to mature and be a better person. A member

of one of these societies may be reproved for some undesirable behaviour by asking him "How is it that you who went through the **mə záan** rites can do (or say) such a thing?"

3. All **Gbeya** words are in phonemic orthography. The acute accent indicates high tone and the absence of a mark indicates low tone. The cedilla under vowel symbols represents nasalization.

4. The Dry Season in this grassland lasts from November through March. This type of "hunting" involves the burning of a very large area in such a way as to trap animals fleeing the oncoming flames. Animals are either speared as they flee or are followed after they have been burnt and then killed off.

5. Our principal informant was **Pierre Nam-kɔ́-ná**, a resident of Saasara, of the Bobire clan, whose older brother was **ayúwá**, and who was himself next in succession to this important office.

6. These names are not etymologizable in **Gbeya**. At Bobire only **tengéle**, **yagbómgbo** and **yaángo** are still living.

7. The word **gaza** usually refers to circumcision: **ne gaze** 'go circumcision' (i.e. be circumcised and initiated), **bé gaze** 'neophyte', **baná gaze** 'one formerly initiated'.

8. The word **ngákórá** occurs in Banda where, according to Tisserant (who writes it *ngakora* or *ngakola*), it is used of a certain spirit with a human form. "On lui rend un culte constant, culte magique auquel est voué une société secrète, *semali Ngakola*." He adds that the word is used as an interjection, a mark of astonishment. R. P. Charles Tisserant: *Dictionnaire Banda-Français*. Paris, 1931. Page 316 cited.

9. A discussion of this language, including a brief analysis of it, is now being prepared for publication.

10. W. J. Samarin, "Sango, an African Lingua Franca," *Word*, 11, 2, 1955.

11. Thus called in spite of the fact that the fetish is the **gbéle** and not the **gba yó**.

12. These features of the cleansing rite occur in other ceremonies as well, e.g. being cleansed after having touched a leopard. (For a discussion of the leopard complex in **Gbeya** culture see article by W. J. Samarin, in press for *Practical Anthropology*, 1959.)

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